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The New Statesman and Nation, October 14, 1933.

AUTUMN BOOKS SUPPLEMENT

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

Incorporating *The Athenæum*

Vol. VI. No. 138 (New Series) **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1933** [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] **SIXPENCE**

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All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. The Postage on this issue is: Inland, 1½d.; Foreign, 2½d.; Canada, 1½d.

THE Fourteenth Assembly of the League of Nations came to an end on Wednesday. It was a short session and rather uneventful; the real business with which three-quarters of the world is preoccupied is in the hands of the Disarmament Conference. The matter of most immediate importance dealt with by the Assembly was the protection of minorities—to be precise, the protection of the Jews in Germany. The German delegation prevented the carrying of a resolution which would have committed Germany to a more decent policy; but the proposal to appoint a High Commissioner to direct refugee work was passed. Enemies of the League will get some *Schadenfreude* out of the report on unpaid contributions. The total of arrears is 21½ million Swiss francs for the period before 1933, and nearly 14 million for the present year. These amounts are certainly far larger than they ought to be; not all the debtors have good excuses. But payment will come in, and it is absurd to talk of the bankruptcy of the League, or to pretend that Great Britain (whose annual contribution is not affected by the payments or defaults of other people) is being bled white by the rascally Chinese and Germans and South Americans.

Conservatives on the War Path

The experience of two years of National Government (necessitating two years of politeness to quondam Socialists and quondam Liberals) has naturally brought the hotter kind of Conservative to the boil. The occasion for boiling right over was the Conservative Annual Conference at Birmingham, where special enthusiasm was shown for those leaders whose tendency to criticise the Government may have been increased by the accident that room was not found for their services within it. Mr. Neville Chamberlain was forced to bring the biggest guns to defeat the Indian rebels! After urging that he was himself satisfied that the safeguards in the White Paper were sufficient, and that it was best in any case to wait for the report of the Select Committee, he made a hanging matter of it by declaring that to vote against the Government's Indian policy was to propose a vote of "no confidence." This combination of argument and coercion defeated the rebellious motion by two to one. On the issue of national defence Lord Lloyd in a jolly jingo mood wanted us to chuck over internationalism altogether and get off the mark in the armament race. Mr. Churchill took the same line, merely remarking that it would be unpleasant for the tax-payer but worth while all the same. This policy of armed isolationism won cheers—until it was very effectively squashed by Mr. Baldwin, who has the re-

deeming characteristic of being able to recognise such dangerous nonsense when he sees it and not being afraid to call it by its real name.

Conservatives and the House of Lords

While the Labour Executive at Hastings was promising to consider a report upon a proposal to put the abolition of the House of Lords in the forefront of its electoral programme, the Conservative Conference at Birmingham was enthusiastically acclaiming Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland's resolution demanding that, without any election at all, the House of Lords should be so reformed that Socialism could never come by constitutional means. The path of Conservative Conferences has been strewn with such resolutions, and present projects of Lords' reform will probably pass into limbo with Lord Salisbury's, Lord Cave's and the rest. But the bolder spirits want reform of the Lords at once, before the next election, and their resolution was passed without opposition. Six years ago in the House of Commons Mr. Ramsay MacDonald made the following comment on this project, to use a Parliamentary majority to shut the safety valve:

> No government placed as this government is can, except by a revolutionary act, divide the constitution into two absolutely water-tight compartments from the point of view of Parliamentary working, and then place the House of Lords, the new Second Chamber, in a position quite independent of the country, and do that by a purely temporary Parliamentary majority. It cannot be done; and nobody knows better than the Prime Minister himself that his action is the action of a temporary majority making permanent changes without our consent, without Parliamentary consent, without any attempt being made to get a national agreement upon it, but using his Parliamentary majority to effect a change in the Constitution which is to be permanent, and which, when made, cannot be unmade in the same way that it is being made. If that be not revolution I do not know what is.

War Debt Talk

The debt talks have opened at Washington between the British and American representatives; and all sorts of rumours are in circulation. It was first said that the Americans were authorised to remit the interest on the debt, on condition of repayment of the principal—a policy which would stand a better chance than most others of endorsement by Congress and by American public opinion, but would still leave Great Britain with a very heavy charge to meet. Then it was said that the British delegates had proposed a final lump sum payment in full settlement of the debt, the finance for this to be raised by a British loan in New York. This would mean the conversion of the debt from an inter-governmental into a commercial obligation which it would be very difficult to modify later. It was also stated that the British had attached to this offer the condition that the sterling-dollar exchange should be stabilised in advance of the floating of the new loan. President Roosevelt himself seems undecided what line to take, and the Americans do not know what they are authorised to offer. It is in fact doubtful whether a settlement is desirable at all at present. War debts ought to be cancelled; but there is no chance of getting America to agree to cancellation yet. The danger is that we shall let ourselves in for another settlement that will turn out, in the event, as unfortunate as Mr. Baldwin's of ten years ago, and even harder to modify later on. This applies especially to any step that would convert the debt from an inter-governmental into a commercial obligation.

Trade Unionism in the U.S.A.

The American Mineworkers' Union is said to have enrolled over 300,000 new members and to have more than doubled its membership during the past few weeks, that is, since the new "coal code" opened the door to unionisation of the non-union coalfields. But the American coal-owners, especially the group connected with the steel industry, are still putting up a stiff fight in many areas against recognition of the Union; and President Roosevelt has had to intervene again this week in an attempt to stop the spread of strikes, and to get the owners to come to terms with the Union. There is a dangerous dispute about the real meaning of the code, and the owners are contending that it does not compel them to grant recognition, and is consistent with the maintenance of the system of "Company Unions" which exists in some of the coalfields. President Roosevelt is obviously unwilling to apply direct coercion if he can avoid it, and perhaps uncertain of the extent of his powers. But he is undoubtedly throwing his influence mainly on the side of the Unions, before which there are opening up enormous opportunities for the extension of power. The question is whether their leaders will have vision and integrity enough to seize their chance without misusing it. American Trade Unionism has a bad name in the world; and, while the stories of its corruption are doubtless exaggerated by its enemies, there is no doubt about its share in the racketeering which is spread so widely throughout American business. Will the real stirring of working-class sentiment throw up a new and better leadership?

Control of the Press in Germany

Many plans have been tried in one country and another for chaining the press and regimenting journalists. But we have heard of none more elaborate than that which has just been promulgated in Germany. A close corporation is established under the name of the Association of the German Press, in which every qualified journalist must be enrolled. This body, under the control of Dr. Goebbels, the Minister of Enlightenment and Propaganda, will itself control the training, welfare, and conduct of its members. Admission to it will be carefully guarded. A journalist must be a citizen of the German Reich; he must not be tainted with a non-Aryan grandparent or a non-Aryan wife; he must be technically trained and "intellectually qualified." When he writes his articles he must respect the truth, and he must avoid a multiplicity of offences, which include saying anything calculated to weaken the State, the common will of the German people, German military preparedness, culture or economy, or to shock religious susceptibilities. It looks as though it might be difficult to steer clear of all these "Verbotens" and yet be a stickler for the truth. But truth, of course, means Nazi truth, and with Dr. Goebbels watching over it all, the German press should give satisfaction to the Government, if not to the public.

Eggs and Poultry

Mr. Walter Elliot is to be congratulated on breaking new ground in the appointments to his new Marketing Commission for eggs and poultry. The rota of persons considered eligible to sit on public commissions has been

ludicrously small; the actors in one commission have scarcely had time to change in the green room before they have been required to appear on the stage in a new role. It was particularly sensible to appoint as chairman Dr. Addison, Mr. Walter Elliot's predecessor in office, and it was sound sense on the part of Mr. Lansbury, as leader of the Labour Party, to agree to Dr. Addison's accepting the offer. For the policy which the present Minister of Agriculture is now carrying out in the setting up of marketing bodies for a wide range of agricultural products was inaugurated by Dr. Addison when he was Minister; and though there are differences of opinion about the composition and powers of these bodies and their proper relation to the State, there is an overwhelmingly strong case for improving the marketing methods of British agriculture, and for using marketing machinery as a means not only of standardising prices under collective bargains, but also of eliciting the right sorts of supply.

Sir Hilton Young and the Slums

Nobody with real knowledge of the housing problem will be taken in by Sir Hilton Young's boast that his slum plans are going to "break the back of the evil" in five years. The programme provides for the demolition of 210,000 houses that are unfit for habitation. But at a conservative estimate there are more than double that number of slums in the country, and five years hence there will be new ones to swell the total. Nevertheless, the Minister is learning something about the question, and within the narrow limits of his vision there are signs that he means business. His answer to a protest from Southampton the other day had spunk in it. The local authority object to proceeding with a clearance scheme on the ground that provision was not made for compensating slum owners, and Mr. Ellis, one of the M.P.s for Southampton, wrote to Sir Hilton to ask whether there was a chance of legislation to right this shocking wrong. The reply was a polite but firm "No," and it was prefaced by this sentence: "It will not, I imagine, be contended that a man is entitled to make a profit out of selling the use of bad houses any more than out of selling bad meat." Of course, it will not be contended quite like that; the landlords will use a different form of words. But we hope Sir Hilton will stick to his.

The Buchmanites

The Buchmanites have come to town and they are receiving as much flattering attention as if they were indeed an Oxford movement intellectually comparable with the movement that split the Anglican Church just a century ago. But then they make up for any lack of intellectual basis by the number of titled and wealthy people who support them, and in the enthusiasm they succeed in creating among the younger scions of the well-to-do. Just why, apart from advertising reasons, they should be called an "Oxford Movement" we have never been able to understand. Dr. Buchman, who graduated at the Mount Airy Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, has never, as far as we know, had any connections with Oxford, nor have any large proportion of his principal lieutenants come from that University. The movement had in fact flourished for twelve years before it was brought to darkest Oxford. But this is a trivial matter in comparison with the larger questions which are perplexing the leaders of the Anglican Church. How far is the kind of "guidance" in "Quiet Times" which Buchmanites enjoy divine guidance, and has the "sharing" before a promiscuous audience of very trivial sins any of the spiritual or therapeutic value which is often undoubtedly to be found in the well-tested Catholic practice of private confession to a trained and experienced priest? It will in any case be extremely interesting to see how London receives the Buchmanites and whether they are really powerful enough to establish themselves within the body of the Church. The movement is well worth studying as a sociological phenomenon in an age which has lost its old faith and is hysterically looking for substitutes.

The "Independent"

We welcome the *Independent* to the select company of the sixpenny weeklies. It starts with the distinction, to which it itself calls attention in its first number, of being, as far as we know, the only paper which has ever found itself involved in a libel action before publication. It sets out to be the organ of the "individualists," of people, that is, who feel, with its founder, Sir Ernest Benn, and a number of other rich men, that the trouble with society is that we have abandoned

> The good old rule, the ancient plan
> That he should take who has the power,
> And he should keep who can.

In pursuance of this ideal the *Independent* dislikes all forms of State control, wants to abolish subsidies for slum clearance, regrets that the National Government only cut the salaries of teachers by ten per cent., and denounces as the worst enemies of society "Conservative Communists" like the Minister of Transport. Whether its love of *laisser faire* will lead it to advocate the abolition of the rule of the road as well as the Factory Acts we do not know: the answer is presumably in the affirmative, since it announces that it will "oppose political action in all its forms; the only form of legislation which will meet with its approval is legislation to repeal legislation. Our firm belief is that, in economic matters, legislation can be of no help." It was Dickens, if we remember rightly, who once described this political philosophy as "Everyman for himself and God for us all, as the elephant said when it danced among the chickens."

Low's Caricatures

The first of the new series of Low's caricatures will be included in next week's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. The subject of next week's caricature is Einstein; we will say no more about it now except that it is both kindly and extremely amusing. Each caricature will be accompanied in the paper by a short literary sketch of the person caricatured that week: these sketches will all be written on a basis of personal knowledge and they will be strictly anonymous. Methods of reproduction have improved since 1926, and we believe that readers will find the new series of twelve even more delightful than the famous series published seven years ago. The limited edition of One Hundred Sets of the first twelve sketches is being rapidly subscribed. Details were published last week. The twelve caricatures will appear weekly, beginning next week and ending January 6th, but subscribers to the limited edition will receive the last three caricatures before Christmas, as some of them may desire to give the complete set as a Christmas present.

THE GERMAN CHALLENGE

THE Disarmament Conference, which reassembles on Monday, will be faced with the most momentous decision in the history of the League of Nations. In the last week or two, even the die-hard optimists have been driven to say, by a sort of invented Coué-ism, "Every day we are growing worse and worse." Germany has given an emphatic refusal to the proposed period of control followed by a general reduction of armaments. She demands an immediate fulfilment of the "equality" which she has been conceded in principle, and that means, in her view, either that the rest of us must start at once to reduce our armaments, or that she must be allowed to increase hers —or both. She wants "prototypes" or samples of the weapons that other States possess; she wants to reconstruct her fortifications. France and her friends on their side will not hear of reductions until they have tested the good faith of Germany. The British Cabinet has set its face against any re-armament by the Germans. And Washington has warned Berlin that American opinion is in line with European, and that intransigence on the part of Germany will jeopardise the Peace Treaty between the two countries. It seems as if the stage is set for a tragedy which, in Mr. Baldwin's words at Birmingham last week, will be the end of the civilisation we know.

In these circumstances, the Conference is no longer a Disarmament Conference, seeking to thresh out technical details, to decide whether we shall have quantitative or qualitative limitations, and what weapons are offensive and what defensive. It has become a Council of Public Safety. The decisions it must take are political decisions, and they should be prompt and plain and bold. Nobody pretends that the problem is an easy one, except the British isolationists who would simply leave the Continent to stew in its own juice, whilst we amuse ourselves in our own island—or, if we want a larger playground, in our Empire. That, to quote Mr. Baldwin again, is, since the invention of the internal combustion engine, a crude and childish idea. Not only are we members of the League of Nations; we are, whether we like it or not, an integral part of Europe, menaced by the common danger, and bound, even in our own narrowest interests, to join in common action to avert that danger. Who can believe in a European war which would pass this country by? Does it need much imagination to foresee the disastrous consequences to us even of the race in armaments before it reached its inevitable end in war? The *Daily Mail*, that blind leader of the blind, is howling over British inferiority in the air. In 1918, it reminds us, we stood first among the nations; to-day we are fifth—France, Italy, the U.S.A., Japan, all have a greater strength in fighting planes than Great Britain, and what we should do now is to set about building thousands more. Have Lord Rothermere and his scribes ever thought this out in terms of taxes? It is surely clear, on grounds alike of humanity and of self-interest, that we have got to play our part in the council of public safety. And it is, or ought to be, clear that by virtue of our position and our prestige that part is supremely important.

What are the chances, then, of preventing the spread of the war epidemic? There is still a possibility—we dare not put it higher than that—that the Germans may at the eleventh hour be amenable to reason, if and when they realise that the world is solid against their claims to re-arm and determined to have a more reliable guarantee of their peaceful intentions than the verbal assurances of Herr Hitler or Baron von Neurath. That guarantee can be nothing less than the supervision, by an international body, of German as of other people's armaments. It has been proposed that there should be a probationary period of control for four years, and then another period of four years, and that arms reductions should only begin in this second period. But the precise length of these periods is not of vital importance; some concession might easily be made, if Germany would accept the plan in principle. As regards Germany's own armaments, the arrangement by which her long service Reichswehr of 100,000 men would be converted in the first period into a short service militia of 200,000 seems fair enough. On the other hand, her demand for sample weapons is either foolish or sinister. What is the use of her having types of guns and tanks and so on, which by the Convention are presently to be scrapped all round? Surely it is waste to manufacture such tokens of equality; her present cardboard models—if they are in fact only cardboard —should suffice. The project, indeed, if it is harmless, looks so absurd that it arouses the gravest doubts as to whether it is really harmless, whether, in fact, the tokens are not desired because, given the equipment to make one token gun or tank, Germany will be in a position to make guns and tanks by the hundred. In any case, there could be no question of allowing their possession to Germany, unless she agreed to the plan of strict and regular supervision. If she repudiates that, and at the same time persists in asserting her right to re-arm, then all chance of accommodation is gone. Hitler and his friends will have proved the hollowness of their pacific professions.

That prospect must be faced, and faced realistically. It is no use crying over spilt milk, regretting our treatment of Germany in the past and the opportunities of making peace that have been so wantonly thrown away. It is equally vain to suppose that we can repair old wrongs by being indulgent to new ones. The Germans believe they have a moral right to re-arm regardless of the consequences. *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum!* they cry, with the support of a few super-idealists and some hardened cynics abroad. But doing "justice" to Germany in the abstract (which means, in fact, to Hitler and his maniacs in the concrete) can only result in doing the grossest injustice to hundreds of millions of innocent people in Europe—including a great mass of Germans themselves. Commonsense revolts against such folly, and commonsense demands that if Nazi Germany threatens the peace of Europe, Europe and anyone else who will help shall take steps to protect the peace. What, should the German Government prove deaf to argument, is the Disarmament Conference to do? There is, as it seems to us, only one answer. It should frame its Convention, providing for control and supervision, and for a truce in armament building now and a reduction of armaments to follow as soon as possible. The Germans by refusing to sign that Convention will be electing to remain bound by the Treaty of Versailles. If they continue to violate the treaty, as they are now violating it, by re-arming themselves, if they continue to break the Covenant, as they are

now breaking it, by acts and deeds that threaten war, then it is not only the right, but the duty, of the League to take police measures. Few of us relish the job of putting pressure on Germany. But unless, when persuasion has failed, we are prepared to use coercion, the state of Europe will soon be Hobbes's state of Nature, where life is, if not "solitary," at all events "nasty, brutish and short."

What precise forms coercion might take, we need not discuss here. A "preventive war" against Germany should be ruled out at once on every ground. Diplomatic, economic and financial sanctions are another matter. They could be applied as and when and in the degree in which it seemed necessary, and we hope that a small dose of them—perhaps even the threat of them—would suffice to change the mind of Herr Hitler. But there is one essential condition attaching to any such action. It needs unity among the League Powers—unity in particular between Great Britain and France. By unity we do not mean "ententes cordiales," "entangling alliances," or anything of the kind. We mean an agreed policy in regard to Germany and the methods of ensuring peace. And that policy ought to be not merely some private understanding between Downing Street and the Quai D'Orsay. It ought to be explicitly stated and known to the whole world, including—and above all—Germany. Continental nations have complained, and with some justice, that they do not know what Great Britain will do in this or that contingency, or how she interprets her pledges under treaties or Covenants. Mr. Baldwin did well in speaking out plainly last week about our intention to stand by our Locarno obligations. We hope that he, or some other spokesman of the Government, will make our position a good deal clearer all round. It is possible that, had the Kaiser's Germany known beforehand what it only discovered in August, 1914, about British policy, there would have been no Great War. It is at least equally possible that if Hitler's Germany knows our policy now, there will be no "next war."

LABOUR AND THE BANKS

THE Labour Party, since the Hastings Conference, is finally committed to the socialisation of the banks—not of the Bank of England alone, but of the joint stock banks as well. At last year's Conference the Executive opposed the inclusion of the joint stock banks within the Party's programme of socialisation. Defeated then by the rank and file of the Conference, it reconsidered its view and came forward at Hastings with a report which included the joint stock banks among the services ripe for immediate socialisation. Thousands of people who have lost their enthusiasm for National Government, and who never had any for those who control our banking policy, must be wondering whether the Executive has altered its mind for purely internal tactical reasons or whether there are strong arguments which have induced the entire Party to agree upon this new orientation of policy. And further, they want to know what the Labour Party purposes to do with the banks when it has socialised them.

The advocates of taking over the joint stock banks have been from the first those who believe that the next Labour Government ought to embark at once on a constructive Socialist policy. Recognising the difficulties and limitations of "social reform" legislation under capitalist conditions, they have urged that, if Labour is to be in a position to redeem its promises to its supporters, it must get effective control of the key positions of the industrial machine, that it must proceed at once to large-scale measures for the socialisation of the leading industries, and that it must aim at bringing under increasing public influence those industries which are left in private hands, so as to be able to insist on the required measures of reorganisation and liquidation of vexatious and burdensome charges. These tasks, it is argued, cannot be successfully attempted by a Government which is without effective power over that service which plays a vital part in the conduct of every industry, by supplying it with the credits necessary to the conduct of its business. Now, as the banks are large creditors of the industries which need reorganisation, they have in effect a veto on plans of reorganisation which do not meet their wishes. A Government in control of the joint stock banks will therefore be in a position both to liquidate the unsound positions that have been built up, and to lay the foundations of a "planned economy" by guiding credit into the right channels.

Last year, the opponents of this view argued that a socialised Bank of England could be successfully managed so as to secure all the control required. The partisans of this opinion seem in part to have been thinking chiefly in terms of the manipulation of the total supply of credit and of the price-level by means of monetary management. But it is now generally recognised—far more generally than a year ago—that monetary management has serious limitations in the stimulus which it can give to constructive industrial development. Money may be plentiful, and yet, as we have cause to know, no one may take it up; and even if there were eager borrowers, they would have to pass the tests of confidence imposed by the joint stock banks. For credit, while its maximum amount may be governed by the central bank, has to pass through the joint stock banks on its way to the actual borrower; and, if the joint stock banks were to take a dislike to the policy of a Socialist Government, how likely would they be to advance to industry the credits necessary for the execution of its schemes?

This seems to have been the final argument which brought the Labour Party over to an agreed advocacy of a complete policy of bank socialisation. Now that the policy has been agreed upon, it becomes very necessary for the Labour Party to think out the full implications of what it has decided to do. One of the principal arguments used by opponents of the policy has been that its endorsement would certainly lead to a financial panic as soon as the return of Labour to power appeared to be imminent. Would not the investing public, fearing confiscatory legislation or at the least inflation, rush to remove their deposits from the joint stock banks and convey them abroad even before a Labour Government had assumed office? Might not the Socialists then find themselves taking over the banks not as solid going concerns, but with coffers emptied and large foreign claims against them?

That this suggestion is not groundless appears from the effect which the senseless and dishonest rumours about deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank had in 1931. There is some danger of panic withdrawals, especially if Labour's political opponents attempt to outdo their electoral gambit of 1931 by provoking a scare. But there is this to be borne in mind. If the City were to join in creating a panic of this sort, its action would be fatally self-destructive. It is all against the interests of the business world that there should be a panic; and it is hardly to be supposed that it would deliberately create one unless it felt the entire game to be up, and were prepared to go to all lengths of sabotage and destruction in order to resist the advance of Socialism. That this should happen is not impossible; but it is certainly foolish to predict with assurance that it is bound to happen.

There is far more danger of a partial panic, not deliberate, but sporadic in its incidence. Against this the best protection is a clear and again and again repeated assurance by the Labour Party, in the most authoritative form, that it will guarantee and protect absolutely the security of the deposits in the banks which it takes into its possession. Undoubtedly, this is what the Labour Party intends; it has not the smallest intention of making any

confiscatory attack on bank desposits. But it wants saying authoritatively and simply, and then saying again and again, so that it gets into people's heads as a promise too explicit and oft-repeated for its violation to be politically possible.

But a panic might occur, not so dangerously but still dangerously enough, from a fear of inflation. On this point no such categorical and absolute statement is feasible; it is not possible to find any agreed definition of what inflation is, or clearly to differentiate a pledge against inflation from a pledge in favour of deflation, which might be at least as disastrous. What is needed in the case is not a pledge, but a much clearer and more careful formulation of monetary policy than the Labour Party has yet attempted to make. Last year the Conference committed itself almost without discussion—for the question got lost in the wider issue of socialisation—to some form of price stabilisation as its monetary objective. Now, this may or may not be the right policy; that is open to argument. But it is assuredly not a policy which the Labour Party, any more than the Conservatives, who have also endorsed it at their Conference, has yet at all clearly thought out. It, and the possible alternatives to it, need thinking out. They must be thought out by a party which, having decided to socialise the banks, is now under an obligation to formulate as plainly as it possibly can what it intends to do with them when they have been socialised.

The decision to socialise is thus only the beginning of the Labour Party's responsibility. We recognise that there was much more than this bare decision in the report submitted at Hastings this month. Those who drafted it will, we presume, readily agree that it is only a preliminary document, and falls far short of framing a workable policy for a socialised banking system to pursue. The essential task now is to work out the consequences of the momentous decision which has been taken.

The real danger of panic lies, we feel sure, far less in the Labour Party's plans being known in advance than in their being unknown and merely guessed at. Fear of the unknown is the chief engenderer of panic in men's minds; and if, as we believe, a sound and workmanlike policy for the conduct of a socialised banking system can be thought out, its formulation and wide publication are by far the best safeguards against panic that can possibly be devised. Moreover, the full policy needs to be worked out and published as long as possible ahead of the actual election in which it is destined to be an important issue. It will have to be debated before it can be understood, and perhaps revised after its first formulation before it can be made water-tight; and to launch it shortly before the election would be to give every opportunity for the picking of holes which there would be no time to stop up, as well as for sheer misrepresentation of the meaning.

The other alternative, which is to go forward with a demand for the socialisation of the banks without saying what is to be done with them, seems to us to be out of the question. It would mean in effect fighting on an "anti-banker" election cry instead of making the issue centre round a solid scheme of Socialist construction; and, though there is plenty of "anti-banker" feeling about, those who set out to exploit it will go down to defeat unless they can convince the middle-class public that they have a better banking policy than the bankers.

There are plenty of other incidental but important issues that the Labour Party must face when it talks about socialising the banks. What is to be the position of the City houses for discount, acceptance and other specialist financial services under the new regime? What is to be the future organisation of the investment market? The National Investment Board advocated by the Labour Party still remains a somewhat nebulous conception. These things too will have to be studied, and clear plans formulated about them. But first and foremost stands the Labour Party's obligation to clarify the general outline of its banking policy, to reassure the public that it has no confiscating attack on the depositor in its mind, and to formulate a programme that will steer a course between the contrasted dangers of inflationary and deflationary finance.

REPUBLICANS AND PROLETARIANS IN SPAIN

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT RECENTLY IN SPAIN].

EIGHTY-FIVE years ago a hungry journalist, whose name was later to become world-famous, was writing for the *New York Tribune* explanations week by week of the revolutionary upheavals around him. As they went on to their predestined and ignoble end, he formed from them a general theory of the probable course of revolutions which hovered uneasily on the brink of Socialism and could not make up their minds.

If Dr. Karl Marx were reporting to-day the cause of the Spanish Revolution to listening Americans, it is probable that he would say: "The Spanish revolution has reached its June, 1848." All external signs point to the near approach of a conflict between the proletariat, part of which is fully "class conscious," and the Republican bourgeoisie, just as occurred in Paris in June, 1848. Over the frontier, expectant and already counting their chickens, wait the Church and the Emperor—though Don Carlos and Don Alfonso elbow each other angrily to secure the place that is ticketed "Napoleon III."

The course of the revolutions of 1848, especially in France, shows a startling and distressing similarity to the course of the Spanish Revolution. A concentrated mass of discontent, political and administrative from the bourgeoisie, economic from the workers, discharges itself upon a feeble and discredited monarchy. (Louis Philippe put up a little better show than Alfonso, but that was all.) A mixed government of Socialists and non-Socialists takes the reins amidst confused acclamations. Eminent poets and high-minded journalists become ministers and Ambassadors. (Don Perez de Ayala is an eminent poet; Señor Madariaga a high-minded League expert and publicist.) An attack on—or rather, a menacing finger shaken at—the Church and the Army is the last and only unanimous action of the Coalition. The class division, in town or country, splits the Republican forces. Either great estates or factories are threatened with confiscation; the bourgeoisie becomes at once tired of revolution. To suppress its one-time allies, it calls more and more on its enemies of the day before. The first mixed troupe of idealists is swiftly dismissed from office. "Stronger" and more experienced old-time politicians take their places. The story ends with Throne and Altar restored to their old position.

The essential similarity to the Spanish revolution is not on the surface only. The reproach made against Azaña was his close connection with the Socialists. What all his successors, from Lerroux to Barrios, have promised is to put a stop to all "confiscations." Already it is clear that a fierce economic struggle is approaching. The "battles of June, 1848," in Spain will not be street fights in the capital; they will be violent and bloody national strikes. They may well be equally decisive. For the bourgeoisie to be able to "handle them," it will need a less idealist Cortes. The real reason for Señor Barrios's action in suddenly ordering elections is that the results of sounding local feeling make it clear that the Left will lose seats to the Right if elections are held at once.

But if Dr. Marx were writing again, would he be justified in prophesying the completion of the whole cycle, even to the restoration of a monarch? It is doubtful. He would, as a realist journalist should, inquire how far this 1848 *revenant* had repeated its prototype's chief error, which was to leave the defences of the defeated enemy intact. In France and Germany, in 1848, the Church and Army were left intact by Lamartine and his fellows who were writing the new Constitutions. How far have Señor Azaña and his colleagues made the same mistake? A fair judge will probably say that they have half made it. The higher ranks of the Army are staffed as before by anti-Republicans who think they have a national right to take over the government by force in a crisis. No considerable measures have been taken to secure the allegiance of the private soldiers to the Republic; and the

chief police force is still the anti-Labour *Guardia Civil*. On the other hand, several thousands of officers have been persuaded to retire, and Señor Azaña when he was in office allowed not a single General to interfere in policy at all.

The Church has been relieved of some of its enormous wealth, and the Jesuit order dissolved. But it has not been shattered as it was in France in 1789. All the orders except the Jesuits go their way as before, and President Zamora is a faithful son of the Church.

Do these two great reactionary forces possess enough strength to sweep Spain back into the current of European reaction? Here again we may be sure Dr. Marx would have stopped us to explain that we could not even ask this question before we had examined the economic circumstances which give such institutions so great a power, and he would be right. No republican or constitutionalist bourgeois class relies upon Army or Church so anxiously unless it is weak, and the Spanish capitalist class is weak. As weak as Kerensky.

Spain came late and slow into the world of modern industry. There are great centres of capitalist production in parts of Catalonia, in Estremadura, in the northern mountains, and elsewhere. But vast areas of Spain are still primitive agricultural communities, and in the majority of them half-starved peasants live in arid uplands, toiling for noble landlords who own huge estates. Enormous mineral and other natural resources are scarcely exploited; the peasant and lord face each other as they did in Russia in 1917. Capitalism is firmly rooted in too few places to be sure of itself. It is therefore sure that the Republican politician, however pure his ideals, will before long have to rely upon the chosen weapons of an older feudal society, the Army and the Church.

But so far our analysis has covered only one side. The advanced forces in 1848 were muddled, disorganised, and—to put it bluntly—led by fools. The Spanish Left wing deserves none of these epithets. Señor Azaña is not only incorruptible—not an everyday thing in Spain—but a politician of great determination and considerable skill. His colleagues to the Left are even more formidable. The Spanish Socialist Party is the only party in Spain which is a party organised on modern lines. It possesses an immense power for that reason. Its only rivals, the Anarchists, are busily destroying themselves. It possesses the unquestioning support of the powerful Trade Union organisation, the U.G.T. It has over a million disciplined supporters, and powers of resistance the men of 1848 never knew. The hope for a continued advance of the Spanish revolution lies within its ranks. But the sudden decision of Señor Barrios to hold the elections for the Cortes means that the chances that that advance will be peaceful are less than they were a week ago.

DANGEROUS DOCTRINE

To receive and care for homeless wanderers is for Christians an absolute obligation.—Lord Hugh Cecil on proposed deportation of Jewish refugees in *Times*, October 5th, 1933.

LAUGH if you will—but him I count
  Not least of Britain's dangers
Who quotes the Sermon on the Mount
  In aid of pauper strangers;
For think, what perils may betide
  If moral obligations
Are once allowed to over-ride
  The interests of nations.

It means, to sum up Cecil's phrase
  In one convenient docket,
Preferring duty to our ease,
  Our conscience to our pocket;
That delegates in Conference met
  (And those who pull the wires of them)
Should ponder less what they can get
  Than what the world requires of them.

It means an end of wars and slums,
  Hard bargains, rattling sabres;
It means that honesty becomes
  The goal of statesmen's labours;
In short, to show how strange a curse
  Cecilian dreams have found us,
It means a world the flat reverse
  Of all we see around us.

MACFLECKNOE

LIFE ON AN ARTERIAL ROAD

I NEVER drive along an arterial road without feeling astonished at the spectacle of the swarms of new red houses that increase along their borders between week-end and week-end. New towns, mostly of the same pattern, are growing up and stretching out their hands to each other on both sides of the perpetual motor-traffic. Villas for sale on the instalment system stand where last year pewits were crying above sheep in pasture. It is as though Cricklewood had gone to the country and populated it with little Cricklewoods. And the more towns of the kind are built, the more Londoners flock out of London to inhabit them. That is what astonishes me most of all. I should have thought that life in a town on an arterial road combined all the disadvantages of life in the country with those of life in a London suburb, and offered few of the advantages of either. It is clear, however, that thousands of people prefer living by the side of an arterial road to living in open country or in London. There must be some reason for their doing so that I cannot understand.

Sometimes I think they must be romantics. The romantic Londoner generally dreams of living in the country, and by the country he means almost anywhere more than twenty miles away from the place where he works. He also associates the country with fresh air, health, green fields and low rents and rates. Possibly, when he buys his little house on the arterial road there are still green fields visible from his bedroom window. He takes it for granted that they will be there for ever. One by one they are dug up, and the bricklayers get to work. Even then he persuades himself that he is living in the country. He thinks of the new town in terms of the fields it has displaced and congratulates himself on living in such healthy surroundings. He sees himself as a back-to-the-land man tending his dahlias in the long summer-time evenings to the gear-music of motor-lorries.

Deep down in his heart, I suspect, he only half wants to live in the country. He is no real lover of solitude. He does not want to live in the country unless plenty of other people go to live in the country in the same neighbourhood. He hates the nights in the country with no lamps along the road and no next-door neighbours to drop in. All the green fields in the world would not make up to him for the lack of company, and the silence of the real country, so soothing in theory, merely gets on his nerves. Therefore to him the ideal life in the country is to live in a brand-new town built on a site that was recently the country. In this way he makes the best of both worlds—the country and the town.

This one can understand. It is the way of human beings to desire two opposite things at the same time, and to miss them both in an attempt at a reasonable compromise. Even so, it is difficult to explain why the modern townsman who is in love with the country builds his town-in-the-country by choice by the side of an arterial road. There are thousands of landowners eager to sell building sites outside the range of the noise of the traffic, yet their fields are left to corn and to cattle. Mankind at the present moment would not give twopence for a new town built anywhere except along an arterial road. The arterial road is a magnet that the young married couple of to-day seems incapable of resisting. Centuries ago, towns and cities grew up around riverside harbours. The arterial road is the river that creates towns to-day. And I for one can see no sense in this unless it is true that, in spite

of all their protests, what human beings love most of all is noise.

Many of us, it must be admitted, hate noise. At least, we hate noises to which we are not accustomed. To spend a night in a hotel in a provincial city, where trams bang along the rails in the small hours of the night and morning, is for many Londoners to experience torture. I can forgive almost any noise more easily than that of a tram. The motor-car, one feels, cannot help making a noise, but the tram, moving along smooth rails, ought to be all but silent. It seems like a malignant monster disturbing the night on purpose. Nor is there any musical rhythm in its bangings, which are individually as unexpected as the explosions of fireworks in the streets on Guy Fawkes night. Other people find it impossible to sleep near the noise of a railway terminus. Other people, again, are kept awake by the pleasant bells of Oxford. I know one or two who, unaccustomed to the sea in their childhood, hate—especially during the night—the sound of waves on the shore. Familiar associations are everything in such cases. The farmer is not disturbed in his slumbers by cocks that begin to crow shortly after midnight: the townsman, however, going to live in a new house in a London suburb and hearing a cock in the neighbourhood saluting the dawn some hours before it is due becomes murderously awake and curses the universe for tormenting him with the unnatural din. It is all a matter of habit. Man can accustom himself to almost anything, and even get to like it. If it were not so we should never have domesticated the barking dog and the mewing cat. Certainly, if it were not so, Siamese cats and their devilish squeals would not now be popular.

The increase of towns along the arterial roads suggests to me that the new generation not only has got accustomed to the noise of motor-traffic, but has got to like it. Most of the people who belong to anti-noise societies, I imagine, are elderly men and women who were brought up in the comparative silence of the Victorian world, where a bus-driver's insult to a long-haired art-student would carry half way across Piccadilly. How much noisier the world is to-day is shown by the fact that bus-drivers have long since given up whistling "Get your hair cut" at pedestrians. They know that in the traffic-roar their whistlings would be as inaudible as a chicken's cheep. Those of us who are over fifty are sometimes foolish enough to dream that it is possible to bring back the old world of greater audibility. Hence the constant flow of letters to the *Times* on the subject. What we forget is that the great majority of our contemporaries have grown up in a motor-noisy world and that to many of them the roar of a sports car through the night is as exhilarating a music as the jingling of a hansom-cab once was to us. The storm of noise that rises and falls all through the night along an arterial road might prevent some of us elders from sleeping, but to the new generation it may well be a lullaby. It must be so, indeed; otherwise the towns along the arterial roads would be empty.

There was a time when I thought that such towns ought not to be allowed to be built. I dreamt of a countryside kept fit for motorists to travel through—of wide roads with perfect surfaces, winding for hundreds of miles among fields and woods and unspoiled villages. I believed even that most people would be happier if a thick barrier of green everywhere separated the arterial roads from human habitations. I now realise that I was deceiving myself. My dream was selfish. I wanted motor roads that would please my own eyes. I had overlooked the fact that motor roads could be a still greater source of pleasure to the ears and eyes of villa-dwellers congregated along their borders. Many writers have praised the delights of the Strand, and do not the arterial roads with their continuous edging of town bring the delights of the Strand into the country? What flaring majesty by night we may expect before the half-century is closed! A greater Tivoli shall arise along the Watford By-pass, and dancing-halls, fully licensed, with swimming pools adjacent, will make life worth living all the way from Kew to Land's End. Everyone will have a country garden from which he will be able to watch the full tide of life sweeping past at sixty miles an hour, busy as the traffic of Jacob's ladder. The country will become so attractive, indeed, that the great towns will be more and more deserted. Nobody will be willing to live pent in a city when rural life provides so many delights unimagined by the poets of old. It is a mere prejudice to prefer the "tu-whit" of an owl to the hoot of a motor-horn, and it is a prejudice that will pass. The country has always been noisy with birds and farm animals: in the future it will be noisy with humanity and the machines of humanity—a far more stirring music. Then gradually that eccentric minority which has always loved quiet and Wordsworth and that kind of thing will discover that the only place where they can obtain peace is London or one of the other great cities. And poets will sing of the charms of London, its seclusion and its stillness, its streets as free from uproar as nineteenth-century country lanes. And nightingales will desert Sussex for Whitehall, and Victoria Station will become a bird sanctuary. And I, meanwhile, shall be dead.

Y. Y.

A LONDON DIARY

AN English barrister who has carefully followed the Reichstag Fire Trial, has summarised his conclusions up to date for me. First, he points out that the most elementary and universal rules of justice—that the prisoners should know exactly what they are charged with, that they should be able to follow the proceedings of their trial, and that they should have free choice of counsel under the law—these are all violated in this trial. The full indictment has not even yet been produced: the prisoners and their counsel do not know what charges they have to meet—or what charges may be added if the present ones fail. They cannot properly follow the proceedings. Tanev knows no German, and Popov very little, and the official interpreters give such an inadequate summary that one foreign correspondent after another has been moved to protest. Deprived of an exact knowledge of the evidence against them, neither of these prisoners has any chance of testing it by cross-examination. As for Dimitrov, he was removed from court for asking questions which were obviously extremely to the point and he was not represented at all in his absence. (He is defending himself because he refused the counsel provided for him by the Nazis.) The prisoners have not chosen their counsel. The foreign lawyers named by the prisoners and their families were refused by the court, and a number of German lawyers who were approached for the defence found it wiser to refuse to serve. One prominent lawyer, a member of the Nazi party, Dr. Ehlers, offered to act for Torgler on the condition that he might consult General Göring first. (It would be interesting to know if Dr. Sack, who eventually undertook Torgler's defence, has also found it necessary to consult General Göring). Finally, the elementary condition of justice that witnesses for the defence can come forward freely is totally absent; some have had to fly the country and the court refuses to take their evidence on commission (which it has the power to do); other witnesses are "not to be found." Dimitrov's suggestion that they should be looked for in concentration camps has not been adopted.

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My legal friend further points out that while the court refuses evidence for the defence, it also denies the defence the right to challenge official statements. Imagine the laughter that would occur in an English court if the judge were solemnly to say that "it is unheard of that any suspicion should be cast on the veracity of officials"! Take one instance. Heisig, a police witness, sent to Holland to gather material about Van der Lubbe's antecedents, has cited interviews with two of his former associates, Van Albada and De Vink, which they, in a public letter and by sworn statement, have completely repudiated, at the same time deposing that they actually made

statements to the contrary effect. Yet the court has so far accepted Heisig's evidence and made no effort to investigate the discrepancy. It kowtows to Vogt, the magistrate, who conducted the preliminary inquiry and who, when challenged about the way in which he had conducted it, answered simply by drawing himself up and saying: "I am a German and my name is Vogt." His account of Van der Lubbe's "confession" contradicts Heisig on vital points, but no inquiry is made into this damaging discrepancy. Though Vogt himself said "I do not think it possible from Van der Lubbe's statements to get a clear picture of his movements" in the Reichstag, the President led Van der Lubbe through a long, detailed and precise account of everything that he had done in the Reichstag, and declared that he had followed and confirmed their accuracy. Further, a number of inaccuracies in the *proces verbaux* of the preliminary examination have been admitted in the court, and Dimitrov states that the record put before the court is not the copy he signed, but contains extraneous material. Yet the court refuses any investigation of this preliminary inquiry. Finally, Dr. Sack has vehemently attacked the legal Commission in London, instancing as one proof of its worthlessness that it accepted evidence that the Reichstag staff were sent off duty early on the evening of the fire, which he states to be untrue. Actually, the report of the Commission, of which Dr. Sack has a copy in his possession, explicitly refuses to say anything on this point for lack of evidence!

* * *

Such a trial would be impossible in any country where the press could comment freely. But the press has been *gleichgeschaltet* (*i.e.*, assimilated to the Nazi regime), is not allowed to report points on the prisoners' side, and, at the instruction of the Ministry of Propaganda, even went so far as to say the precise opposite of the truth, that the evidence "proved Van der Lubbe a Communist." The German public is probably even ignorant of the basic fact that the Supreme Court which is trying this case has itself been *gleichgeschaltet*. Three judges conveniently resigned, and the rest are expected to be subservient. The trial, in other words, is a political case, and the verdict will presumably be what Hitler thinks politically most wise. Which is a very good reason for making all the fuss we can about its inequity. England is not at present *gleichgeschaltet* and the Nazis are not insensitive to foreign opinion.

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Under the heading "No Longer Thinking," the *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, a very informative paper written in English and published in Japan, states that a large number of prisoners in Japan have abandoned their Communist faith. I suspect the *Japan Chronicle* of irony when it says that "this tendency has been assiduously encouraged by the Criminal Investigation Bureau," and proceeds to quote the official reasons given for the recent "conversion" of 548 prisoners. Then follows a classified list of "reasons for change of heart." The largest group is "parental or family love," their "introspection through imprisonment," "perusal of books," "prison chaplains' influence," "relations of livelihood (such as the sense of responsibility for supporting their families)," "state of health," "racial awakening," the influence of two well-known leaders who were converted, "natural traits," "recognition of the gravity of the national situation."

* * *

The writer of a recent fashion article in the *Daily Express* describes a dress show in which "all the garments gloried in being unashamedly feminine." Here are a few specimens of femininity.

"A turquoise blue chiffon evening dress . . . had a bolero coat entirely made of osprey, dyed to match the dress." "A black-topped, white-skirted tulle frock had its sleeves edged in sweeping osprey." "An afternoon dress of black crêpe was trimmed with Paradise plumes." "A white velvet evening coat had its sleeves entirely composed of white fox, the head of each fox resting on the shoulder of the wearer."

If this is femininity, give me the nudists.

Pope Pius XI told a group of 450 unemployed to-day that "If the Divine Providence caused you to be deprived of work, He did it for your own good." The unemployed had made a pilgrimage to the Holy See from Great Britain to seek the Pontiff's blessing. —*New York Herald Tribune.*

* * *

Dr. C. Killick Millard, Medical Officer of Health for Leicester, whose gospel is that every person should be physically fit, was lecturing on Saturday on how to be fit at fifty, when he said though he was sixty-three he could still stand on his head, and proceeded to do so. —*Manchester Guardian.*

* * *

That the Advisory Negotiations Committee of the League of Nations should promptly take effective steps to establish as internationally as possible, a speedy boycott—diplomatic, financial and commercial—against Japan's War Lords as Treaty-dishonouring, lawless aggressors, recalcitrant, world-defying, vulture-exploiting Imperialists.—I.L.P. Branch resolution.

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Reminiscent of Dickens and Thackeray though united to the abandon and sexual violence of Feuchtwanger.—Review in *Everyman* of recent novel.

* * *

M. Daladier believes that if no convention is reached at Geneva the result will be war, and he is prepared to go to considerable lengths to get one.—*News-Chronicle.*

* * *

Astronomy—Lady seeks private intuition from qualified teacher. —Advert. in *Times.*

* * *

We speak with the knowledge of having studied the White *v.* Black problem on the spot. The Black in Africa understands one type of justice, cruel as it may sound—the justice of a kick on the shins.—From a leader on Tshekedi in *Evening Chronicle.*

* * *

We forgot to mention in our last number that ten boys were confirmed by His Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham, the Visitor of the School, on the 5th July, 1932, only two or three hours after the O.T.C. Inspection. The Archbishop remarked how suitable this was: the burden of his words was, "Whosoever is not with Me, is against Me": no half measures are possible in our modern world.—*School Magazine.*

* * *

If the Duchess of York's mother, the Countess of Strathmore, had been a boy, she would have succeeded to the dukedom. As it was, it went to her cousin, the present Duke. Besides shooting, he has been very keen on racing; he has a strong disbelief in black horses on the Turf.—Autolycus in the *Sunday Times.*

* * *

They met while students at Haselrigge Road Night School, when Miss Goble and her parents were living at Clapham, and their radiant smiles as they stepped out of the church into Saturday's brilliant sunshine showed the great advantages of evening education.—Local paper.

CRITIC

Correspondence

THE PRESENT CONFUSION

SIR,—The four articles on *The Present Confusion* must have been of great interest to all readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. May I comment on some of Mr. Cole's propositions?

He began his series with certain admirably concise objectives:

"Out of all the many things that are amiss with the world to-day, which is fundamental?"

"What forces are at hand, and can be used for putting right fundamental evil?"

"What forces stand chiefly in the way of putting it right?"

In answer to the first question, Mr. Cole naturally indicts Capitalism as the villain. Exactly what its critics mean by Capitalism is always a little puzzling to understand. Sometimes it is synonymous with production for exchange; with consumers' control; with *laissez faire*; or just simply with the present system. In this instance it comprises apparently both the last two definitions, and it is on this assumption that the indictment is based. But can such an assumption be justified? *Laissez faire* was the predominant feature of our economic system up to 1910; the system we have lived under since the war has been something very different. *Laissez faire* had obvious defects, but it also had the achievement of raising the standard of living for an increasing

population and keeping the rate of unemployment for sixty years down to levels that were wonderfully low by present-day standards.

On this old system it has imposed a steadily increasing volume of legislation, in part excellent, but essentially unco-ordinated and meriting the criticism recently passed upon it by Sir Arthur Salter that it had been "improvised by opportunities." Whatever else it may have done, it has in effect stifled the powers of self-adjustment and the forces making towards a re-establishment of equilibrium. Elasticity has given way to inelasticity in everything except the volume of unemployment. I submit, therefore, that the object of our analysis should not be Capitalism, but Capitalism plus a medley of politically improvised controls and restrictions. What does such an analysis indicate?

A return to complete *laissez faire* for many reasons is both undesirable and impracticable. On the other hand, it is doubtful if salvation is to be found in mere multiplication of existing legislation. For example, sugar beet and wheat production schemes scarcely encourage us to hope that such legislation is going to turn our natural resources to their most productive uses. Nor does it seem likely to avoid contradictions of policy. For instance, the present restriction of public works is "deflationary" while the objective of the Agricultural Marketing Acts is "inflationary." Either may be right, but it is inconceivable that legislation comprising of both can be fruitful.

Is not the way out of The Present Confusion to realise that our attempts to modify *laissez faire* have been actuated too much by the piecemeal tackling of isolated problems, or by political considerations, and insufficiently by a comprehensive review of economic facts? If so, this is the direction in which we should turn our efforts and make a start by giving the Government's economic advisers more authority and making public their reports. If this could be done our industrial and commercial legislation might be drastically curtailed in volume, but better directed, and such things as more elasticity in our internal price level might assist us in recovering once more our pre-war steadiness of employment.

Passing to more detailed comments in Mr. Cole's articles, it is odd that he should assert of Capitalism that "it inevitably seeks scarcity and not abundance." The outstanding and earliest examples of a deliberate search for scarcity are to be found in Brazilian coffee and rubber restriction—both acts of political interference in economic matters, and typical of such enterprise in their unhappy results.

It is a little surprising for those of us who are immersed in industry to be told that "we are unable to grasp the fundamental truth that things cannot on the whole cost more than people are able and prepared to spend on them." The whole cause of so much time and energy being spent on market research is the realisation of this fact. It is also for this same reason we rack our brains to devise more efficient and continually cheaper methods of production to broaden our market.

It is hard to reconcile some of the statements about Economic Nationalism in the third article with the facts. For instance, that "countries which follow a policy of Economic Nationalism must become, within the limits of their productive power, high-wage countries if they are to survive" scarcely seems to square with the highly developed Economic Nationalism of Spain. Nor would a comparison of wage rates in France and Denmark substantiate the claim that "out of their diminished resources they (countries devoted to Economic Nationalism) would have to pay a larger proportion in wages and other forms of widely-diffused consuming power, than if they were working within an international economic system of the nineteenth century type."

However, Mr. Cole ends on a note of interrogation: "But will Socialism come at all? I do not regard its coming as inevitable." That is an opinion which many like myself will share with him, however much we differ in other respects.

L. J. CADBURY

TITHES

SIR,—Is the controversy between Mr. Pitt-Rivers and Mr. Middleton a private fight or may anyone join in? Because I should like to deal a blow, however feeble, on the side of Mr. Middleton.

So far as English law is concerned, it is simply not true to say that there are any fundamental rules of common law which are superior to all Acts of Parliament. (That Mr. Pitt-Rivers should link "precedents" with Acts of Parliament, as if they were on the same "inferior" level, is strange, seeing that it is by precedents that the common law is ascertained and established). Parliament is legally omnipotent and can and does "arbitrarily" alter and abolish the rules of common law whenever it sees fit to do so. I have not looked up the details of the Hampden case, but apparently, if that worthy's supporters had not been sufficiently powerful in Parliament, the common law might well have remained what it was declared to be by three courts of competent jurisdiction.

I submit that it is equally incorrect to say that tithes have no sanction in common law. The fact that during part of their history they came within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts is immaterial, because these courts themselves were, and are, part of the legal system of this country and derive their powers from the common (or it may be statute) law of England. As well say that the common law gave no sanction to marriage, because down to 1857 matrimonial causes were decided in the ecclesiastical courts.

The title to tithe was, and is, as good as the title to a piece of land for the sole reason that the courts enforce the one as well as the other by the appropriate methods. These, in the case of tithe, seem apt to prove ineffective where there is concerted and systematic resistance, but the same objection often applies to other legal rights. Mr. Pitt-Rivers states that in the statute 16 Car. I c. 14 it was held that the judgment given against Hampden was against (among other things) the right of property. Whatever may be the merits *ad misericordiam* of the tithe-payer's case, it is strange to seek support for it in an Act of Parliament which purported to vindicate "the right of property."

49 Prince's Square, W.2. J. R. A. BRADLEY

TSHEKEDI

SIR,—Dr. Norman Leys begins his letter by stating that many Africans regard "indirect rule" very differently from Captain Mumford. This suggests that I definitely defended that policy. All I said was that indirect rule "may be and probably is the better plan, but it is also by far the most dangerous and difficult." What I intended to imply was that ruling through chiefs having certain superficial advantages, was tempting officialdom to apply it a little recklessly. This does not necessarily invalidate the principle. Dr. Leys points out that so-called Western civilisation cannot be kept away from Africans, which is obviously true; but he may possibly agree with me that until the Western nations are a little more certain of the trend of their own civilisation an arrangement which tends to check its wholesale importation into Africa and elsewhere may have its advantages. Educated natives both in Asia and Africa are predominantly hostile to the scheme, and many of their criticisms are valid, but it is open to question whether they would not be wiser to turn their hostility towards the practice rather than the principle. It is they themselves, if they choose to be constructive, who can effectively prevent its worst danger, that of absolute autocracy. PHILIP S. MUMFORD

St. Mary's Grange, Easthorpe,
Kelvedon, Essex.

SIR,—I should like to express my entire concurrence with Dr. Leys—see his letter in your last issue—with one exception. For "fortifying native autocracies" I should read "creating native autocracies where they did not previously exist."

This misconception as to the powers of a Zulu chief was the fatal flaw in W. Y. Campbell's *Native Code for Natal* (1888), and gave rise to the perfectly logical deduction therefrom, that the Governor of Natal, in his capacity of "Supreme Chief" over the natives, was likewise "above all law and could do no wrong."

It is sufficient to mention, in answer to this, the Report of the Cape Commission of 1883, in which the evidence given by Cetewayo and other chiefs made it quite clear that they had no power to make or alter laws without the consent of the tribe, as voiced through their councillors. European legislators found it difficult to realise that "constitutional checks" of a very effective kind could exist in the absence of written laws.

The theory of Indirect Rule is excellent, but it is to be feared that, with the best intentions, the want of full knowledge has resulted in a dislocation of the very institution we set out to preserve—a dislocation which may be sufficient to vitiate the whole scheme. As for the remedy—I will not attempt to discuss that question, but have no doubt that the Africans themselves, if given the chance, will work one out in time. A. WERNER

PAVLOV AND HIS DOGS

SIR,—I do not at the moment wish to discuss the rights and wrongs of animals, or of vivisection experiments; still less do I want to start a controversy on the service or disservice that vivisection has rendered to what is called scientific knowledge. Personally, I could not kill a man or burn down his house without learning something from my observations. But I must protest at the misrepresentation of the facts in the article on *Pavlov and his Dogs*, published in your last issue.

The writer, Mr. Mellersh, quotes, in order to ridicule it, Bernard Shaw's description of Pavlov's "twenty-five years of devoted research, during which he cut out the brains of innumerable dogs and observed their spittle by making holes in their cheeks for them to salivate through." Mr. Mellersh has not the courage flatly to deny the literal accuracy of Mr. Shaw's report; but he devotes nearly two columns to persuading your readers that it is, in fact, a mere figment of Mr. Shaw's imagination. "Pavlov's fundamental principle," he says, "is that no reliable information can be obtained from animals unless their responses are totally undisturbed by pain or discomfort—which makes him such a mistaken target for the anti-vivisectionists." Clearly, therefore, we are asked to infer, all his results must be obtained by kindness. "A dog is placed," says Mr. Mellersh, "with soft loops to keep him there, upon a stand"; food is given him, accompanied or preceded by the twang of a tuning-fork or a little flash of light, "and in time the dog will learn that this sign means food. His tail will wag and his mouth water." Mr. Mellersh then enumerates some of the important conclusions at which Pavlov arrived as a result of this innocent play with his pets—"and all this from making dogs' mouths water."

Mr. Mellersh is aware, as he ingenuously admits, that "very little is known of Pavlov and his dogs in this country." As further knowledge seems desirable, I will quote a few sentences from Pavlov's largest and most important work, *Conditioned Reflexes*—which, from the footnote, I assume to have been before Mr. Mellersh when he wrote his article.

> All the dogs employed in the experiments are subjected to a preliminary minor operation, which consists in the transplantation of the opening of the salivary duct from its natural place on the mucous membrane of the mouth to the outside skin. . . . In this new position, the duct is fixed by a few stitches which are removed when the wound is healed. As a result of this operation the saliva now flows to the outside, on to the chin or cheek of the animal instead of into the mouth, so that the measurement of the secretory activity of the gland is greatly facilitated.

So far, so good; but the scientist's zeal for knowledge is not thus easily appeased.

> I have been unfortunate in attempting to improve the operative technique, having made, as I now think, a big mistake. In order to obviate haemorrhage during the operation, I used to remove in the dogs, long before the operation on the brain, the temporal muscles which cover the skull. . . . Almost every animal that was operated upon suffered from attacks of convulsions. . . . A few animals died during the first attack.

However, the technique was soon improved; and Pavlov was able to remove bits of brain from hundreds of dogs, with results entirely satisfactory. The accounts of these experiments occupy nearly a hundred pages of his book. All sorts of interesting things were observed.

> In two of these animals the cortical substance of the brain was removed posterior to a line starting from . . . The operation was performed in two stages, first on one and then on the other side. Absolute deafness appeared immediately after the operation. One of the dogs lived for nine months after the operation, the other for seven. The third dog died during an attack of convulsions.

But the behaviour of other dogs from whom bigger slices of brain had been removed was even "more interesting."

> We had two such animals, and both survived the operation for about a year. After the final operation the first dog kept sleeping almost continuously. Food was introduced into the stomach directly, through a gastric fistula which had been established previously to the second operation. It was only at the beginning of the third week after the final operation that the animal began to get up and stand on its legs unassisted, and then only for a very short time, swaying from side to side and finally sinking down again. The animal was quite incapable of performing two locomotor actions at the same time. As a result of such attempts it would lose its balance and topple over. This peculiarity remained to the end of its life. After an attack of convulsions, the animal became very excited, throwing itself about without any sense of direction, and barking; but finally it quieted down, got very drowsy, and soon fell fast asleep. The animal sometimes had peculiar attacks without any apparent cause—tremor of the whole body, clonic contractions of the jaws, with a cramp-like twisting of the head to one side, finishing up with an ejection of urine and faeces.

Other phenomena even more fascinating are described in Pavlov's great book.

Mr. Mellersh tells us that Pavlov chose dogs for his experiments because they "are tractable and friendly animals"; and he adds that "when off work" they lived "with his wife and children." I think it desirable to ensure that they "live" also in the minds of a larger community. It is well for us to realise the price paid for "scientific knowledge," the value of which seems to some of us often hyperbolically assessed. HARRY ROBERTS

Oakshott Hanger,
Hawkley, Hants.

CONDITIONS IN GERMANY

SIR,—Those of your correspondents who, after a sojourn of three weeks in Germany, are so impressed by the outwardly peaceful attitude of the population and the peaceful utterances of Chancellor Hitler may be interested in the following.

An acquaintance of mine, who was until recently an assistant medical doctor in a German University, expressed, in the course of conversation with "friends" over a glass of lager, that he was not in favour of the re-introduction of conscription in Germany, as in his opinion that would be a step nearer to the next war. This statement was made over a year ago, long before the assumption of power by so-called legal means was dreamt of. This young man was recently questioned by a committee of University Professors as to the truth of this assertion which had been reported by a "friend," denunciation being one of the evils accompanying the movement and always a favoured sport in Germany. He replied truthfully that he still held that view. The following day he was compelled to hand in his resignation under threat of other measures for non-compliance. He will under no circumstances be able to obtain employment in Germany under this regime. What is he to do? He is a Christian, and, as far as I know, the Refugee Committees in England are solely Jewish organisations. A. GOSLING

9 Courtfield Gardens, S.W.5.

COMMANDER KENWORTHY

SIR,—The writer of the editorial paragraph headed "Party Issues at Hastings" in your issue of October 7th has fallen into error in describing me as a leader of the new Association of Constituency Labour Parties. I had no responsibility for, nor part in, its formation, and am not even a member. I attended the meeting of this body prior to the Conference with a watching brief at the request of the Divisional Labour Party which I represented at the Conference as a delegate. J. M. KENWORTHY

137 Gloucester Road, S.W.7.

HUMANE FURS

SIR,—With the cold weather now approaching people will be buying their new furs. Those who has a copy of the Fur Crusade White List will, I am sure, prefer to choose those which have been obtained in a humane way, of which there is a very extensive selection. None of these animals has suffered days of torture in the steel trap, or of agony from the Set-hook, a devilish device largely used, by which an animal is induced to reach for and swallow a baited fish-hook attached to a wire trace. Just now a very beautiful species of monkey is in danger of extermination on account of the present craze for fur trimmings. Fur farms are fortunately on the increase, and there are now over 10,000 in America and Canada. During the present year many thoroughly efficient humane traps have been invented for use in this country. These should render the steel-toothed gin, and almost equally cruel snare, no longer necessary; and millions of rabbits and other creatures can be saved a great deal of suffering.

I am now issuing two leaflets, one relating to furs—which includes the White List—and one about humane trapping in England. I should indeed be grateful to your readers if they will help me to carry on this much needed propaganda.

Wappenham Ho., Towcester.

C. VAN DER BYL (Major)
Founder of the Fur Crusade and Humane Trapping Campaign

Miscellany

THE PROPERTY OF A LADY

ROOMS in London require dusting daily if they are to look like the rooms of a lady. And so, every morning, Miss Amy Cruttwell's rooms were dusted from head to foot, first the bedroom and then the sitting-room; for all things belonging to her must look like the property of a lady, it was their doom and hers. Twice a week the silver was carefully polished, and the china, the dresden figures and the two millefleur boots, entirely encrusted with sharp miscroscopic forget-me-nots, were washed in the handbasin. While the dusting was being performed Miss Cruttwell was energetic, angry, and contented, the natural rancour of a single woman of sixty living on a small pension flowing easily from her like a sweat. But by eleven o'clock, when all was over, and the brooms and brushes and dusters put away in the ottoman, it was an even hazard whether her pride or her weariness would conquer, whether she would look round with a toss of the head, saying to herself: "Well, if any one comes, it's ready for them," or, suddenly prostrated by a longing for a cup of tea, stare at the gas ring and remember how lonely she was, how old, and how neglected, and how, all her life long, she had kept the lady-standard flying, had been scrupulously clean, scrupulously honest, scrupulously refined, and nothing had come of it save to be old and neglected and lonely.

For though the rooms were so neat, so ready for company, even to having a little bunch of flowers always fresh and daintily arranged, very few people entered them. Sometimes the wife of the clergyman looked in, sometimes the retired matron of the nursing home where Miss Cruttwell's appendix had been removed, sometimes the widow of the gentleman whose secretary Miss Cruttwell had been. They were all nice people, she had never known any but nice people. They appreciated her delicacy of mind and of person, they admired the tea-set, they said how refreshing it was to see a tree from the window; and sometimes, tactfully, they would leave behind a tin of fancy biscuits or a cardboard box containing grapes.

But they did not come often. And when they came, they went. And when they invited her to their houses and she accepted the invitation (she did not always accept) she, too, had to go away; and the warmth of the white wine would evaporate in the bus, and when she had reached home and put away her gloves and shaken her hat and hung up her coat and put her walking shoes on their trees and lit the gas-fire there was not much left but melancholy.

And so things went on till she was sixty-five. Then, almost simultaneously, she had influenza and was given a portable wireless. The wireless came from the widow of the gentleman and with it came a note, saying: *Dearest Amy. I am so sorry I have not been to see you for such a long time. I am still terribly rushed, I do not quite know when I shall get to you. But with this wireless and all the delightful things which are now being broadcast, I'm sure you will not miss my stupid conversation. Yours ever affly, Muriel.*

Suddenly enraged by the hollowness of the universe and of all human intercourse, Amy Cruttwell sniffed contemptuously at the wireless as a cat sniffs at milk which it knows to be sour, and turned away; but presently she came back, as a starving cat will, and turned it on. Out came, swimmingly, a polite voice announcing football news. Not interrupting it she went and sat in the farthest corner, stiffly upright, clenching her hands together, darting furious glances about the empty room. So that was what it was all worth, their pretence of friendship! That was all the appreciation one might look for, all the sympathy!—great vulgar wirelesses which they had not even the civility to bring themselves. And every now and then an orange.

"Why should I stay alive?" she asked the announcer. Why, indeed, to buy herrings and the cheapest china tea, to mend old nightdresses, take circulars from the letter-box, dust two rooms daily which no one entered but herself. No one noticed her, she glided through the wet streets unscanned. No one would notice if she died, she said to herself, passionately tasting the sweet strong knowledge of what a to-do her death, her suicide, would create, what stabbing surprise, what pangs of conscience, what convicting self-reproaches among her false friends.

The football news had given place to music on the organ. Those sturdy waves bore her onward, buoying her resolve. And with tears coursing down her cheeks she wrote several farewell letters, letters which would be found after her death, and read at the inquest, and published in the papers. But at last, alas! she must descend from her happiness, she must decide how to kill herself.

Not water, not gas. She rejected those two elements. Her rooms were at the top of the house, but she did not want to die in the street, with people treading in her blood. A seemly death, something dignified. (*She looked so wonderfully peaceful, so inscrutable, lying there, with all her wrinkles gone. But Oh! so sad*). Aspirin! A whole bottle of aspirin, and she had such. One did not swallow the tablets, one crushed them in water and drank.

"The last time I shall use this teaspoon," she thought proudly. And the tablets were all crushed, and the drink, chalky white, deadly white, ready in the medicine glass . . . Like knowing that two and two make four she knew that she had not the courage to drink. Cold with fear, sick with shame, she turned off the wireless, and tore up the farewell letters, and emptied the medicine glass into the slop-pail. A whole bottle of aspirin wasted.

It was dusk, and the muffin-bell had gone ringing down the street, when she came out of her despair as out of a terrible slumber. But one thing came with her, a raging resolve to claw her way into those easy minds which could forget her, a living woman, for weeks and then send her a wireless. If she could not get into the papers by one means she could by another.

So she dressed with her usual exact care, lacing her shoes briskly, smoothing on her gloves; for a lady is always known by her neatness of hand and foot. The drizzle of rain was rather pleasant than otherwise, she felt herself walking lightly and elegantly, comparing well with those other figures bundled in their winter coats, dragging children after them or foolishly pursuing buses. She passed the dairy, and the fish-shop, and the rather vulgar greengrocer with an outside stall where, shopping, she fortified herself with thoughts of Parisian economy. But to-night she had no business with these. She was going to Whiteleys to steal, to be a shop-lifter. Grandly the soft full illumination of Whiteleys flowered on the dowdy Queen's Road. There in the windows were those composition women whose hair never needed cutting, who never felt the cold. In their taper fingers they held silk stockings or dangled silver foxes, and at their feet were scent-sprays and eiderdown quilts and tickets saying neatly, £5 19*s.* 6*d.* She would begin by stealing a scent-spray.

Under that floodlit central dome everything was warm and luxurious and orchid-like. The air was sweet, the carpets were soft, the lights, like sharp amorous caresses pinched little gasps of reflected light from cut-glass bottles and crystal powder-bowls and sleek virgin boxes of cosmetics and rich sleepy cakes of soap. Out of this glittering jungle looked the blueish flesh-tints of the woman behind the counter, thinking she knew Miss Cruttwell, nodding good evening to her. "Can I assist you, madam?" "No, thank you," said Miss Cruttwell and lingered ostentatiously, fingering the clasp of that large useful bag which had been a present from the retired matron of the nursing home. And slowly she walked round, her mind licking the smooth soaps, the flasks of scent, the powder-puffs and the rejuvenating face-creams. This she would have, and that; and when she had finished with that counter she would go on to the adjacent cheap fashionable jewellery, the pearls as large as cherries, the jade earrings; and end up with the gloves.

To one who has led a virtuous life, sin is the easiest thing in the world. No experience of unpleasant consequences grits that smooth sliding fall, no recollection of disillusionment blurs that pure desire. Like a blackbird singing Amy Cruttwell stole two cakes of soap, a swansdown powder-puff, a scent-spray, and a bottle of golden perfume which swayed voluptuously within its glassy walls; and then, going on to the cheap and fashionable jewellery, she stole a brooch on a velvet pad, an enamelled cigarette case, and a bracelet of weighty false pearls. Theft was in itself such rapture, such calm of paradise, that she forgot that she was stealing for a purpose; it was only at the glove counter, surveying the more serious texture of leather, that she recollected the need to be discovered and arrested and taken to the police and put into the papers. Parading herself, making a slow motion of theft, she took a pair of gloves; but no one noticed. Another pair; and now the bag was full. But it was all right. They never arrested one at the counter because of the unpleasant impression it made upon the other customers. They shadowed one, followed one to the door, struck there. And walking proudly over the dense carpets she reached the swinging doors of glass and metal, and passed into the raw cold outside.

A man came hastily after her, brushed against her, set the bag swinging, and went on.

She waited. She waited. People went in and out, but no one noticed her. Tethered to one of the pillars was a dog, a poodle, whose shaved flanks twitched with cold. It lengthened itself towards her, gave a sniff, sighed disappointedly and turned away again, to sit with patience under the draughty portico on the cold stone. She waited. But no one came, no one noticed her.

At last she began to walk home.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

MOLIÈRE AND MUSIC

THE late Arnold Bennett used to be irritated by the common bracketing of poetry with drama in catalogues, publishers' announcements, and the literary supplements of the critical weeklies giving lists of forthcoming books. Personally, I always thought the reason of this irritation lay in the fact that he was a successful novelist and had an ambition to be an equally successful dramatist which was never gratified. In my opinion the connection of poetry with drama is a real one, as is the connection of music with drama and with poetry; but neither poetry nor music have any connection with the novel. It cannot be altogether a coincidence that the greatest of the classical dramatists were poets, that Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ben Jonson and the best Elizabethan and Renaissance dramatists were poets, and, finally, that the best French dramatists Molière, Racine and Corneille, also were poets.

The poets have left the modern theatre (or the theatre has left them) and so have the musicians. This is partly due to that general movement towards specialisation which was so conspicuous a feature of nineteenth-century activity, although the tendency showed itself earlier. We may have gained something in each department through this specialisation, but we have also lost, and one of our losses has been in elasticity and variety of effect. The boundaries of each form have been narrowed and made more rigid, and I feel sure that there will come, sooner or later, a strong movement towards breaking through these limitations and readjusting them. Or, perhaps, we shall discover new combinations that will be based upon earlier discarded ones but with new life breathed into them. One of these combinations will be, I think, that of drama with music, not to make an opera nor to make a play with incidental music, but a combination in which the music will play a definitely dramatic role.

One cannot pretend that the two most famous combinations of the past were perfect, or that they have left us completely satisfactory works. The two combinations I speak of were those of Molière with Lully, which came to an end with the death of Molière in 1673, and Dryden with Purcell, which ended with Purcell's death in 1695. Such works as Dryden and Purcell's *King Arthur* and Molière and Lully's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* are fine examples of what can be done in this form which unfortunately was never developed further owing to the side-tracking into opera as we know it to-day, in which the music became the dominating factor to such an extent that the dramatic poet shrank to a mere librettist. It has been the fashion in musical histories to consider this a progress, and so we are told that French opera came to birth after the death of Molière with *Cadmus and Hermione* composed and written by Lully and Quinault, first performed in 1673, although it had been preceded the year before with a tentative pasticcio entitled *Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus*, also by Lully and Quinault. English opera never came to birth at all, and the extremely difficult and delightful form of music and drama exemplified by *King Arthur* was abandoned in England without even being succeeded by a native opera. I think one of the factors which has had most to do with the development of opera and the abandonment of the *King Arthur* form has been the difficulty of collaboration. Music-drama—to use the expression purloined inaccurately by Wagner for his own ends—demands a collaboration of equals. This is so difficult to find that the tendency is inevitably to gravitate either towards the drama or the music. If the drama becomes subordinate we get opera, in which every word, even the most trivial, is set to music, and we depend upon the genius of the composer to make us overlook the text. In fact, the text has become of so little importance that nowadays we can and do listen to operas in a foreign language of which we understand nothing without any loss of pleasure or with discomfort. Drama has degenerated into a photographic imitation of daily business on the stage to which both music and poetry are equally alien. But I do not think these two present-day artificialities, opera and drama as we know them, represent the last word in theatrical development. I believe a return will be made to see what possibilities of development music-drama properly so-called may offer.

I should like, therefore, to draw attention to Mr. Ashley Duke's presentation, next Thursday, for nine nights at his new little public Mercury Theatre (The Ballet Club, 2, Ladbroke Road, Notting Hill Gate), of *Jupiter Translated*, a comedy from Molière with music and ballet which I have reconstructed in the effort to do something along the lines I have indicated on the old music-drama form. It was our first intention to try to use music by Lully, but although he collaborated with Molière in many works, some of which were described by the comprehensive title of Tragi-Comédie-Ballet, there is no music to that particular play of Molière's, namely, *Amphitryon*, which I have reconstructed as Molière reconstructed the original Latin play by Plautus. It was, therefore, more fitting that a contemporary musician should collaborate and a contemporary producer and choregrapher also. So Mr. Anthony Bernard has specially composed the music for *Jupiter Translated*, keeping in mind the original form in which Lully collaborated with Molière and Purcell with Dryden. It remains to be seen how successful our united efforts are, and as I am responsible for the text I shall say no more about the production except that it is an attempt to unite music, drama, ballet and machines (by which I mean a particular use of *décor*) in an agreeable and organic way. It is because I am interested in this form and hope that it will be developed in the theatre that I draw the attention of our readers to this opportunity of seeing this experiment and judging it for themselves, because we have on this occasion the advantage of a young producer and choregrapher, Mr. Rupert Doone understands exactly what he is aiming at.

Few people have seen the production of *King Arthur* given at Cambridge some years ago, but all who saw it expressed their enthusiasm. Speaking for myself, I would far rather see a production of *King Arthur* than of any opera by Puccini. I do not think there is any future for the present stereotyped opera form, but I believe that music is destined to play a new

role in the theatre. This role will be that of marriage with the drama. It is essential that the plot and the text should come first, but then the music should be so used as to strengthen, soften or heighten the drama according to the original conception of the piece in which the poet specifically allots to the music a definite function as an indispensable means of expression.

W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Bells"

Sir John Martin-Harvey is considerably happier at the Savoy with this revival of Irving's famous show-piece. The broadly defined emotions, the fierce, direct appeal, the paraphernalia of simple-hearted stimuli which the piece contains provide him with admirable opportunities, some of which he is able to put to splendid use. Perhaps he brings a shade too much benignity to the part of Mathias—surely the latent villainy deserves more expression than those few furtive looks—and in the dream trial scene there are too many groans and not enough snarls. But to compensate there are those distinctive flashes, vivid and impressive in their apparent spontaneity, which can startle even a jaded modernist into appreciation; and nobody who is interested in theatrical history can afford to miss them. Incidentally, the play itself, though no masterpiece, is obviously far from being the worthless trash which readers of the text have pronounced it.

"Son of Man," at the Embassy

There is a shallowness and falsity about *Son of Man* by the late E. Temple Thurston that ruins its dramatic chances from the beginning. The emotions are forced and the characters so stylised that they soon lose significance. Also the play is saddled with a thesis and the characters have to shout it so loudly that one is never convinced that the author really believed it himself. The play has a *Constant Nymph* setting, and its most effective situations are borrowed from melodrama. There is a storm in the mountains, a scene from a Passion Play and a murder, but there are also long tedious patches, which are too long to be removed without showing the framework in all its shoddiness. The whole thing is so creaky dramatically that one has plenty of time to study the acting, and watch the workings of an ingenious production. Mr. André van Gyseghem's rewards as producer in this case will be smaller than his deserts, but he has at least made a bad play tolerable to watch, and has given chances to a cast which knows how to use them. Mr. John Laurie has the hardest task because he has to get across most of the heroics with some show of sincerity, and he does it remarkably well. Miss Rosalinde Fuller, too, gives consistency to a part which is full of cooked-up emotions. The smaller parts provide few opportunities, but such chances as there are are never missed. But with all the good acting in the world there would be no hope of making a good play out of this poor nonsense.

"Nymph Errant"

On the art of whetting the public appetite it would be presumptuous to offer Mr. Cochran so much as a hint. The nightly traffic blocks in the Strand at the beginning of this week testify sufficiently to London's interest in *Nymph Errant* at the Adelphi. But will that interest be sustained? Here is a lavish, colourful, and at times witty production with a central theme that is novel and amusing. Miss Gertrude Lawrence has never exploited her cool, passionless charm to greater advantage, and she is supported by a company of first-rate acting talent. The music is undistinguished, but the best of Mr. Cole-Porter's lyrics—"Ruins," "The Physician" and "Experiment"—are both verbally and rhythmically delicious. In face of all this it would seem absurd to criticise *Nymph Errant* as anaemic; but it is not to be denied that there are moments when the bright chatter and rather flashy set-pieces leave one with a sensation of starving in the midst of plenty. Further, there are occasional lapses—tedious songs, uninspired dances, false crescendos, all of which might escape criticism in nine-tenths of the musical shows produced, but which in a Cochran production must disappoint. Fairer, perhaps, to discuss the excellences—Mr. Austin Trevor's charming French revue-producer, Mr. Bruce Winston's complacent eunuch, and Mr. Morton Selten, inspired to unbelievable perfection by Peter Arno, as a disgusting old Austro-Italian count. The desert scene between Miss Lawrence and Mr. Walter Crisham is perfect light comedy, and Miss Zinkeisen's 1830 costumes are magnificent.

Miss Marie Löhr at the Playhouse.

So Good! So Kind!! has very little to recommend it except Miss Marie Löhr, who gets a certain amount of fun out of a part that intrinsically contains none at all. She can give point to the tritest remark. The play has few pretensions, but it does not allow nearly enough scope for decorations by a talented cast. The talent is continually kept in check by pointless situations and boring discussions. The play begins to wake up to its real character half way through the second act, when people knock over flower-vases and cars crash into gateposts. But there is not enough of this sort of thing, and the serious philosophy of Life and Love which punctuates the less knockabout parts of the play is too banal for words.

"Ring Up the Curtain"

Ring Up the Curtain, at the Empire, relates the fortunes of a family of vaudeville actors, with "Ten stars and three hundred chorus." In practice, although three hundred seems, alas, a modest computation for the chorus, there is only one star, Mr. "Schnozzle" Durante, who scuttles past, in a snarl of indignation, almost before one can notice him. Indeed, the film is something of a deception. It is one of those occasions, rare, fortunately, nowadays, when Hollywood spends too little money, and then seeks to disguise the fact with huge, bad revue scenes, in colour, starlets, and snatches of Pagliaccism. Hollywood, one fears, cannot make a reasonable film without spending money, and, above all, on stars.

The Academy

Paris-Mediterranée, at the Academy in Oxford Street, is the antithesis of the foregoing. Far better than its German version (the present producer, curiously, was with Ufa), it sometimes reaches pure comedy. The very beginning is marred by shots of romantic postcards, far filthier than "filthy postcards," and the excellent ones made in the department store immediately afterwards are, consequently, a shocking improvement. There is a Chaplin note in this film of the shopgirl and the prince-in-disguise, and it is largely due to the efforts of M. Duvalles, a comedian of the first rank. It may be somewhat amateurish and "out of date," but it is an example of how a little, genuine European imagination can triumph over its own lapses and lulls, and over the dollar. Many, perhaps, will miss some small rhapsody over Annabella, the leading lady, but I cannot find more in this popular figure than a charming face and an intermittent lyric note.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, October 13th—
- London String Quartet, Wigmore Hall, 8.30; and Saturday at 3.
- Mass Meeting to review the Leipzig Trial. Speeches by Sir Stafford Cripps, James Maxton, Prof. Hogben and others, Kingsway Hall, 7.30.
- Eric Gill on "Art and Industrialism," Central School of Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row, 7.30.
- "Cupid and the Styx," Tavistock Little Theatre, 36 Tavistock Place.

SATURDAY, October 14th—
- Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11. Lamond, Queen's Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, October 15th—
- C. Delisle Burns on "The Horizon in Morality," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, October 16th—
- "Gloriana," Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich.

TUESDAY, October 17th—
- Bertram Pickard on "What of Internationalism To-day?" Friend's House, Euston Road, 1.20.
- Miss Mary Field on "Are Films Worth While?" Y.W.C.A. Central Club, Gt. Russell Street, 7.30.
- Prof. H. J. Laski on "The Search for Social Justice: An Ideal for England," Mary Ward Settlement, 36 Tavistock Place, 8.
- "Kabale und Liebe," Duke of York's Theatre.

WEDNESDAY, October 18th—
- J. A. Hobson on "Rationalism and Humanism," Conway Hall, 8.
- "The Wind and the Rain," St. Martin's Theatre.

THURSDAY, October 19th—
- Prof. J. E. Neale on "Queen Elizabeth," University College, 5.30.
- Frank Hunt on "London Housing and Its Problems," Morley College, 8.
- G. D. H. Cole on "Changes and Anticipations in Political Structure," Kingsway Hall, 8.30.
- "Jupiter Translated," Mercury Theatre, 2 Ladbroke Road, W.11.
- "Maternité," Daly's Theatre.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

I mounted the wooden stile and advanced towards it, and as the setting sun broke through the tattered edges of the ink-black cloud, saw in a hollow below me a ruined cottage guarded by two ancient pear-trees, with a green stagnant pond, matted and windless, at the door. A tangle of giant elder bushes overhung the pond, clustered round the house, pressed out of the frameless windows, tossing up in superincumbent masses into the air their white racemes of flowers; and the sickly odour reaching to where I stood, I was reminded of a skull half-buried in the grass and of strong leaves forcing open the sutures and pressing their tufts in the empty sockets.

THAT simple description has, to my mind, a very unusual quality. Instead of merely drawing a picture, it appears by some trick, such as great actresses employ to sway the passions of their audiences, to plant an exact and vivid memory in the mind and then to appeal to it and remind the reader of it. "When," I ask myself, "did I see that cottage with those blossoming elders forcing themselves out of the frameless windows? Where was the place, what was the occasion?" But since this is only one tiny passage in a whole book full of such deceptive appeals to the memory, I must conclude that I only know those elders and that skull-like cottage from reading *Jack Robinson*, by George Beaton (Chatto and Windus, 7*s.* 6*d.*).

* * *

I have read the book several times and it has become part of my experience of life: the shaking figures who wander along the roads, the girls walking the streets in London have been seen by me afresh through Jack Robinson's eyes: I have incorporated his adventures into my own. The explanation is, in my opinion, that the author is a really great writer. I think, indeed, that the publication of this, his first book, in its deceptive jacket, is by far the most exciting literary event of the year, perhaps of very many years. His story is cast in what is the oldest form of the novel—the boy who runs away from home and goes on a journey—falling in first with one, and then with another, tramp upon the roads, sharing the life and learning the philosophy of each until at last he finds his own and, freed from the illusions of boyhood, returns with a man's maturity, to his home. Such a book might be like anything, but, since the first characteristic of a great artist to strike one is his originality, it appears to be like nothing but itself. In any age the appearance of a new great writer is an astonishing event, but it is particularly so to-day when books come out by dozens every week and scarcely one *work of imagination* can be found in all the fiction. Analyse the novels published every week and you will find they are almost all psychological safety valves of some sort, outlets which function to enable their authors to maintain a robust good opinion of themselves. A novel is either *amusing*, sparkling with all the wit that its author hasn't been able to show in ordinary conversation, or it is *nasty*, with the author scoring off his old friends and revenging himself on life for its disappointments, or it is full of a sugary excretion like that of the greenfly, or it is a dream. . . To come across a serious book in which completely new characters have been created seems more extraordinary now than ever before.

* * *

It was natural for me to choose such a passage as the ruined cottage among the elder trees to quote, for its beauty is of a kind which can be isolated; such descriptions of nature are many and lovely and tempting, but to quote them would be to give a false impression. The descriptions of misery and squalor have the same quality. Here is a slum in Bristol:

A heavy nauseating smell infected and penetrated the whole district, sinking deeper every moment one stayed in it and producing soon an overpowering melancholy. If one forced one's way into the houses it became far worse, for sometimes in one diminutive chamber an entire family would be congregated—there was not room for all to stand upon the floor, one or two must climb up upon the bed. Washing that had been washed in vain (for it was still dirty) hung in dense veils and clotted leafage from its sagging strings: on the chairs half-finished eatables: beds unmade by sunset: children old and pale standing in circles. Every activity seemed to have been arrested and brought to an end but simmering and corruption.

That picture has been reported a hundred times before, but nowhere so directly and so well. But to concentrate upon such descriptive passages is to leave out the most striking features of the book—the drawing of character and the conversations in which tramps, beggars and prostitutes reveal their religions and philosophies. But both portraits of character and conversations depend for their value so much on what has gone before that the task of picking out a representative passage is too hard. The reader must take my word that the characters of the Cheeser, Lily, and the Man in Sacks are the unforgettable things of the book. Thinking of them only is liable to blind one to certain faults. The chief of these is that *Jack Robinson* is a rambling book, and like all picaresque romances would not suffer if some of the incidents were left out. There is too much of Kelly, far too much; worse still, the author has allowed himself to fall into long philosophic digressions which are unsuited to the age and education of his hero. He would have shown more art if he had condensed Jack's philosophy into a page or have revealed it to us only in Jack's words. To tell it in the first person, when it cannot be Jack who is speaking, is a fault. But when I have said that, I have said all that can be urged in criticism against the book. Indeed, these criticisms apply with equal force to nearly every famous novel in English literature. They are equally true, for example, of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tom Jones*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, etc. There are hardly any English tales which have perfect form and in which the author does not intrude himself, so that *Jack Robinson* in these, and, indeed, in all other respects is absolutely traditional. In one way, to be sure, the book is remarkable indeed—for the beauty of Mr. Beaton's style holds the reader delighted throughout the book. In the following passage one of the most characteristic points of the author's style is apparent—namely, the suspension of emphasis until the end of the sentence:

The lower windows were curtained, but out of an upper room there came a beam of light and threw beside me upon a bank of unruffled and now freezing snow the sharp configuration of a lattice. A shadow crossed it and looking up I saw the head and shoulders of a woman seated by the light of two candles before a mirror and stroking with a silver-mounted brush her long fair hair. The white arm, naked to the shoulder rose and fell like the bow of a violin, the silver softly flashed and on the dark surface of the mirror, trembling in the dance of the candle-flame and refracted by the thick panes of the window there floated—vague and incorporeal as the image that rises before the crystal-gazer—a pair of dark eyes and pale features.

Such a construction has the effect of keeping our attention increasingly alert as we read. Thus we start every sentence relaxed and end in a state of tension.

* * *

There is vividness and horror (some people may find the Cheeser merely disgusting) and fresh humour:

Can corkscrews exist, I said to myself, and no bottles, stomachs and no food, human beings and no happiness and love?

Jack Robinson will be most appreciated by empty-handed idle persons. My own feelings for it are best described in this following final quotation:

As I bent to pass through the narrow opening I perceived close under my eyes, growing alone out of the bare moist earth, a little plant of groundsel: then when a second later I lifted my head I saw, perhaps half a mile distant, against a background of grey chaotic sky a factory chimney, softly and impassively smoking. At the first sight of that little plant, then, following it, of that ascending triumphant smoke, an inexpressible feeling of joy came over me, deeper than ordinary delight, more assured than ecstasy. I knew too why I felt this: no vain researches on the meaning of beauty were required to interpret it. I had seen this smoke, I had noted this plant once before. . . .

Yes, I have read and re-read *Jack Robinson* with a feeling of joy, deeper than ordinary delight, more assured than ecstasy.

DAVID GARNETT

WE PREFER CATHAY

Fifty Years of Europe. A Study in Pre-War Documents. By J. A. SPENDER. *Cassell.* 21s.

This is a diplomatic and military history of the fifty years which preceded and produced the war. It is based upon that intolerable mass of "documents," official and unofficial, secret and overt, yellow and black and green and hectic red, which have been published since 1918 by Governments and individuals anxious to prove either that they were not responsible or that some one else was responsible for causing the war. Mr. Spender tells the story chronologically from August, 1871, when as a first step in Bismarck's policy of alliances the German Emperor William I went on a visit to the Emperor Franz Josef in Vienna, to August, 1914, when, as the inevitable outcome of that policy, the German Emperor William II supported the Emperor Franz Josef in his ultimatum to Serbia and so let loose the war. The book does not contain anything which is new, but Mr. Spender has a sound knowledge of his documents and he has written a useful, readable account of pre-war policy. On some aspects of that policy he has the advantage of being able to talk with a certain authority, because, of course, as one of the last of a now extinct class of editor, he was in intimate touch with the Liberal statesmen, particularly Lord Grey and Mr. Asquith.

Mr. Spender is better at analysing the various incidents than he is at reconstructing the broad lines of policy, calculating their effects, and apportioning responsibility. That is why his account of the period before 1900 is much more incisive and convincing than of the period from 1900 and 1914 during which the statesmen and soldiers, having constructed their infernal instrument, wound it up for war. As he approaches the grand finale, vagueness, repetition, and woolliness creep in. This may be due in part to a lack of impartiality. No one can be impartial about the origins of the war, but a larger measure of objectivity than is found in this book is certainly possible, and it would have very greatly added to the book's value. Mr. Spender is never unfair, and he is always trying hard to be fair. But he cannot divest himself of or make allowance for his bias as a supporter of the Entente and of the Liberal Government; indeed he often does not seem to realise that he has this bias. For example, he always gives the benefit of any doubt to the Entente or a member of the Entente, hardly ever to a member of the Triple Alliance. His character sketches of the Tsar and Isvolsky are patently kinder than they would have been had those two persons, so contemptible in their different ways, been German or Austrian. He never states the case of those who criticise the policy of Lord Grey and the Liberal Government in the way in which he states the case of those who criticise the policy of the German or Austrian Governments. This weakens the last part of his book and obscures its lesson. And the bias and weakness are quite unnecessary. The "war guilt" of the German and Austrian Governments does not decrease or evaporate under objective analysis; it is there for all men to read in their own documents, above the signatures of their soldiers and so-called statesmen. Nothing can alter the fact that the major responsibility for the war rests on the shoulders of these men, but the surest way of obscuring the fact is not to admit the measure of responsibility which rests on the shoulders of Russian, French and British statesmen.

A book like this, which gives in some detail a connected narrative of the actions and policies of those who directed the affairs of the great nations before 1914, is always useful, but however familiar the facts, however often one may have unravelled the tangled skein, one feels again before this stupendous exhibition of human savagery and stupidity amazement, consternation, disgust. There is not one single object of policy, the pursuit of which caused the war, which any sane or civilised man would consider worth the life, not of a Pomeranian Grenadier, but of a sparrow. In the marginal comments which the Kaiser made on official documents we see these objects in their naked imbecility, because the writer added to the ordinary incapacities of statesmen the irreticence of an unbalanced mind; but one must remember that this nightmare world of the Kaiser's comments was treated as a reality, as the basis of foreign policy, as a sufficient cause for a world war, by all kings, emperors, foreign secretaries, generals, and admirals—by the vacillating, treacherous Tsar, the sly Isvolsky, the still slyer Aerenthal, the honourable and humane Sir Edward Grey, the strong "realist" Clemenceau, the ferocious Conrad, the patriot Tirpitz, and the bluff Sir John Fisher. It is an extraordinary spectacle. The objects of foreign policy are either hallucinations or, when real, worthless; the policies pursued never attain their objects, not even in the hands of a Bismarck. Many of the people entrusted with the control of policy, and therefore with the destiny of millions of human beings, were half-witted, weak-minded, or dangerous imbeciles. They contrived an elaborate system of international relationship based almost entirely upon a perpetual threat and fear of war. For fifty years European man—supposed to be civilised—allowed kings, emperors, soldiers, and foreign offices to talk of nothing else but war, the threat and fear of war, to prepare for war, to make alliances for war, to construct and wind up a gigantic machine for war. Why there should be war, and what the war would be really about, no one really considered. And when at last they all decided in 1913 that war was inevitable, and it came in 1914, no one did know what it was really about. We are still disputing what were the causes and origins of the war and we still don't know what it was all about. The truth is that the cause of the war was the threat and fear of war, and the object of the war was war. All the other things were hallucinations flitting through this primeval nightmare. And thanks to the peace and Hitler and the patriots and fire-eaters in all nations we are getting back again rapidly to the same primeval nightmare. It looks as if politically, so far as international affairs are concerned, we human beings still remain rather nasty and brutish savages.

LEONARD WOOLF

NEW NOVELS

"Stir." By GEORGE INGRAM. *Denis Archer.* 7s. 6d.
Georgia Nigger. By JOHN L. SPIVAK. *Wishart.* 8s. 6d.
Four Days' Wonder. By A. A. MILNE. *Methuen.* 7s. 6d.
Tropical Winter. By JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.
Farewell Victoria. By T. H. WHITE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
No Sense in Form. By BERESFORD EGAN. *Denis Archer.* 7s. 6d.

Time was when novelists, upon occasion, would label their stories "Founded on Fact." A little later, under Gallic influences, they served "slices of life." Later still, though manifestly writing novels which are transcriptions of particular experience or observation, they began to supply short prefaces proclaiming that everything was a figment of pure imagination and that no cap of theirs could fit any living head—a device which need deceive no reader and certainly does not deceive the law. These books are generally angry books, and very often their anger is thoroughly commendable. But frequently the question arises whether they are conceived in the form best suited to convey both the facts and the anger. The novel, with many aspiring writers of these quasi-documentary books, is an obsession; it is seldom so easy a path as might appear; *ars est celare acta*, and to very few the art is given.

Mr. Ingram, for instance, the author of "*Stir*," has served a term of penal servitude, an experience which, unfortunately, few professional novelists have had. He has a sharp eye, strong feelings, and a detailed memory of what he went through. But there is no valid reason why he should have transposed his story into the third person singular, fastened it to a dummy figure labelled "Roberts," and tricked it out with a hurriedly happy ending and some vague devices to lure the reader into a sentimental sympathy for a misused young man. One reads a book like this only to try to see inside the walls of the convict prison, and so long as Mr. Ingram is showing us that, simply and directly, he is good. The obsession of the novel form, the idea that readers are only going to accept something cooked and flavoured according to the recipe, cramps his style, makes Roberts a rather smug and irritating person, and keeps one uncertain as to where facts end and fiction begins. This is not to say that his book should not be read; the pity is that many clear notes of verisimilitude and feeling should so often be blurred.

Georgia Nigger also is to be read primarily as a document, although Mr. Spivak has made a far more skilful literary use of his investigations than Mr. Ingram has of his experience. His theme, the chain-gang penal system and other forms of camouflaged black slavery in certain of the Southern States, has been sensationally foreshadowed by one or two films; but here is the horrible story again, far less meretricious in trappings and far more effective. *Georgia Nigger* appears avowedly as a propagandist novel, but even if it had none of the photographic "exhibits" to advance its case and drive home the lesson of its essential authenticity it would stand on its own merits as a well-drawn sketch of real men. David Jackson, the negro lad who works out his six months'

sentence to a chain-gang only to get into the hands of a white exploiter of coloured labour, and then is hustled back into spike shackles, the "cage" and the "sweat box," is a living creature, and not a demonstration puppet. There is something terrifyingly convincing in Mr. Spivak's picture of the dodges by which the baser planters advance twenty-five or fifty dollars to pay the fines imposed on negroes for petty offences and so "save" them from prison, sign them on as labourers, and then manipulate their pay-rolls and canteen accounts so that the poor devils never get the debit cleared. If there *is* "another side" to the case presented in this disturbing piece of first-hand reporting, it must be a tortuous one.

These gloomy paths lead unexpectedly to Mr. A. A. Milne, as brightly-sprightly, whimsy-flimsy as ever in *Four Days' Wonder*. The first sentence of his first paragraph discloses a nice, neat, inoffensive corpse (feminine, and of good family) lying on a floor within a stone's-throw of Harrods on a sunny June morning. But here is no cause for tears, reader: the corpse of poor Aunt Jane will bring nobody to Pentonville. Ripples of polite laughter and the susurrations of girlish love surround the coffin, and it is very nice to think at the end that Jenny Windell (a young lady of slightly arrested development) is pretty well bound to marry a terribly attractive young man in the wine trade. As for Aunt Jane (who wasn't really murdered, of course—that would have been very unpleasant), it is a pity that she had to be sacrificed to make a niece's holiday—but possibly, as the Sheriff said in the tragedy of Frankie and Johnny, "it was all for the best." The whole bag of tricks is manipulated by Mr. Milne with the fixed, resolute smile of the acrobatic dancer doing her stuff.

There is a resolutely professional air, too, about Mr. Joseph Hergesheimer. *Tropical Winter* looks like a novel, but its ten untitled sections turn out to be ten short stories; and these turn out to be as monotonous and machine-made as they could be. The monotony comes chiefly from the dull, cardboard setting of the stories, which are all staged at Palm Beach ("the world's most expensive and fantastic beach resort," the publishers kindly explain on the wrapper); but even although Mr. Hergesheimer still has the knack of making flesh-and-blood beings out of these men and women whose wealth is their sole reason for existence, he exhausts one's mild interest by the rigidity of his narration. He has travelled a long way from the vigour and freshness of *The Three Black Pennys* or *Linda Condon*, and in the wrong direction. It is significant of the lack of real impulse behind this writing to find that, out of ten stories, nine start off with exactly the same formula—

> John Cleg said to his wife, Clara, in the patio of their house . . .
> Marthe Vibard was cross . . .
> Crawford James stood in the doorway to Mr. John Laverock's extremely private office . . .
> Ann Soveran stared at John Fair . . .
> Mrs. John Boggs, Ella, comfortable with tea and minute iced cakes, looked about her . . .

And so on . . . and so on.

Farewell Victoria is amusing, sensitive, and sometimes pleasantly moving. Mr. T. H. White has an almost unmanageable theme—the shift of life and custom between the eighteen-fifties and the nineteen-thirties. But he has a sense of form (witness his admirably modelled Part II), and manages in a novel of ordinary length to balance the interest very delicately between the figure of Mundy, the groom of Victorian days who "sticks to horses" and ends his life forlorn amid Georgian garages, and the fashions of living and morals and locomotion which rule his obscure destiny on earth. The mid-Victorian pictures have the true John Leech quality about them, and Mr. White has a very deft way of bridging the years and shifting his key to match them. Only occasionally does he break the smoothness of the imaginative quality of his story by intruding too documentary a note (once even a footnote). The book is light, but not slight.

No Sense in Form is a mystery. The title of the book is a mystery. Its story is an inextricable mystery. There is a tremendous pother floating about it all, but the powder seems to be damp. Not even the red errata-slip (for "diety" read "deity," for "sweet tea things" read "sweet things") has helped me to grasp the aesthetic and moral problems of Hugh Rayven, that sculptor "tall and broad-shouldered to the point of caricature," who "for twelve mad months had hacked and hewn at the rugged stone" that the world "might behold the titanic beauty of his muse." They must have been formidable: his path was crossed by Olive Vernell, for instance, who

> in the privacy of her scented chamber, appraised her seductive nakedness preparatory to donning the gay silk pyjamas she held aloft in her hands. . . . The pale line of her teeth was dimly visible, and the green eyes glowed above it like a leopard's in the night. Softly she clawed the gay pyjamas and, with feline grace, she put them on, thrilling momentarily at the silken, cool caress.

Well may Mr. Egan exclaim in this connection:

> Ah, the sweet might of sensual form! Where flies the spirit at the sweet torment of your touch?

Shade of Irene Iddesleigh, attend us! HAMISH MILES

A SKETCH OF STRINDBERG

Strindberg. By G. A. CAMPBELL. *Duckworth.* 2s.

Strindberg anticipated a whole new school of biography. His life was actually of the sort which "psychographers," and other devotees of the interior illumination, have attempted disastrously to fix on Swift or Ruskin. Strindberg in fact lived, and wrote, his own interior biography, thus saving his critics the work of guessing—the pleasure, too, of invention. One may dispute the details of his self-revelation; the outline is indisputable.

Perhaps for this reason he has been neglected by biographers. Portions of the Autobiography remain untranslated, and until three years ago no Life of Strindberg had appeared in English. Mr. Campbell's sketch in the Duckworth series of Great Lives does something to remedy this (though he does not seem to have read the Swedish sources), for it gives us a straightforward and balanced account of a man whom it is not easy to discuss without either dislike or a tinge of his own sensationalism. Matter-of-factness, however unfashionable at the moment, is the only method a biographer can apply to Strindberg; and Mr. Campbell applies it with success.

He makes, indeed, a surprisingly even narrative of the zig-zags of Strindberg's career. His treatment of the writings is adequate, but at times non-committal, especially when he has to deal with the last group of plays, several of which have not yet been translated into English. Considered apart from his writings, Strindberg is apt to appear as a super-charlatan who was ready to take up Chinese, chemistry, mysticism, painting or anything else as whim or circumstance suggested. He changes from revolutionary to

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man of the world, from libertine to ascetic; his whole life is a series of furious contradictions. There are the same contradictions in his writing, but at the same time a grasp and lucidity which were often lacking in the mad squalor of his life. For the astounding thing about Strindberg as an artist is that from the worst muddles of his experience he could always emerge with a finer, more essential handling of his art. *The Spook Sonata* is about as mad as anything that has ever been put on the stage; but what marvellous stagecraft it is, what possibilities of a new poetry of the stage it suggests! Any biography which is going to tell us more about Strindberg than he has already told us himself must be based on a closer study of his plays than critics have yet attempted. That, of course, is beyond the limits of Mr. Campbell's little book, which is welcome as a sensible treatment of a difficult subject.

THE PRESENT AND ITS FUTURE

The Horizon of Experience. By C. DELISLE BURNS. *Allen and Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

"The only criterion which is not obstructive in its application to modern movements is derived," says Dr. Burns, "not from the past, but from the future." And again: "The word 'emergence' has become fashionable, as a means of explaining the relation between moments or situations in succession. It is certainly better than the word 'evolution.'" I wonder whether it really is? But perhaps you should not stop too long questioning it, before you read what Dr. Burns has to say. For the sentences quoted above are quite fundamental to his thought; and as it is very interesting and attractive thought, it would be a pity to miss its architecture merely because, when you come to reflect on it afterwards, you may be disposed to doubt some of the foundations.

His book attempts a very comprehensive survey of the phenomena of modern life. Politics and society, ethics and religion, psychology and psycho-analysis, science and art, invention and architecture, and even the separate fine-art groups, as Dr. Burns classifies them—dance, music, plastic arts, and literature—all come under his review. He tries to show, and is largely successful in showing, that in all these fields, not only has the twentieth century parted company rather abruptly from the nineteenth, but a common rhythm can be traced in its departure. Breach with tradition for breach's sake; recurrences to the primitive and sallies into the exotic—if only to escape anything so recent and overshadowing as either the classical or the romantic; the hunt for new materials—glass walls in architecture, steel chains in furnishing, atonality in music, and so on; the general desire to abandon all rules or boundaries hitherto observed, and to see what social life or sexual life, or personal experience, or any particular art, will be like without them; the dissociation of the arts from each other, and from human feeling, and the attempt to develop formal satisfactions as a goal in each—such tendencies and many others are found pursuing parallel courses in almost all the departments of contemporary life.

It is obvious that to fill in the details of so large a picture neither Dr. Burns nor anybody else could treat each subject with full knowledge of his own. He is bound in a great many cases to consult authorities, and to repeat what they have to say. The risk in this—which Dr. Burns does not entirely escape—is that one may in some cases accept the claims of pretentious ideas at a face-value which would not bear a more intimate analysis. Our author strikes me here as decidedly more "knowledgeable," for instance, about literature than about music. But these are details; the more interesting thing is his general interpretation of the movement. It is indicated in the title; this is an age, when the horizons of mankind are rapidly shifting; and instead of taking the world as we find it and organising it upon accepted lines, we are straining our eyes to the verge, and seeking how we may adjust our minds and lives to coming things, whose shape and significance we cannot define at that range, although we know they are there. Thus if towards the past our attitude appears often to be one of negation and loss, towards the future it is one of many-sided approach and gain. Ages similarly dominated by new horizons have, says Dr. Burns, existed before. Taking the Western world since 400 B.C., he maps the following sequences—400 B.C. to 400 A.D.: Greek-Roman system; A.D. 400–800: new horizons; A.D. 800–1400: Mediaeval system; A.D. 1400–1600: new horizons; A.D. 1600–1900: Renaissance system; A.D. 1900–2000: new horizons. The sequences and parallelisms, which he develops at length in his text, are summarised at pp. 332–3 of a table, in which science, music, the plastic arts, literature, personal ideals, political ideals, economic life, and religion are all docketed off for each period.

This is a cheering and stimulating doctrine. It consoles us for our pains by telling us that they are growing pains; it turns our thoughts during the night-watches away from yesterday's sunset and fixes them instead on to-morrow's dawn. Moreover, the argument carries a wealth of suggestion in detail. Yet is it in its essentials true? I confess that a lot of the docketing in Dr. Burns's time-table seems to me very strained and artificial. Is there any real parallelism between such a period of *Götterdämmerung* as A.D. 400–800 and such a period of *Aufklärung* as A.D. 1400–1600? And granted that the present shows resemblances to both, is that a ground for treating the three as, to any significant extent, parallels? Nor may the block-treatment of the other periods (e.g., 400 B.C. to 400 A.D.) strike us as any more satisfactory, when we look into it. It is surely too crude a view which lumps Greek and Roman together without allowing for the Hellenistic phase between or the successive phases under Rome herself. If you take politics, the difference between the world as it appeared to Pericles and the world as it appeared to Julius Caesar was just as great as that between the world-outlooks of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries; and similar criticisms might be passed on many other parts of Dr. Burns's scheme.

His interpretation of to-day's art tendencies may or may not prove right, but it certainly is not the most obvious one. Looking back into history, one constantly finds great creative periods followed by periods in which creativeness is ousted by cleverness (the two seldom co-existing, either in art or in literature). Now the century following the publication of Rousseau's *Contrat Social* was undoubtedly one of the greatest creative periods of the world. Only B.C. 480–330 in Greece and A.D. 1250–1550 in Italy can perhaps be compared with it. May it not be that the Alexandrine-Hellenistic period, which succeeded the first of these, presents more parallels to our own than any other, unless possibly the Silver Age (similarly following a Golden Age) at Rome? The main difference, perhaps, is that with us the drive forward of science and mechanical invention still continues. But whether mechanical creation without spiritual creation can save us, we have yet to see. The course so far taken by the cinema suggests some answers—on the horizon.

R. C. K. ENSOR

"INTEGER VITAE"

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. By GERTRUDE STEIN. *Lane.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

From beginning to end *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, by Gertrude Stein, has the vivacity and fascination of a well-ripened index. Itself it has no index. But being so full and varied it is possible to find in it any subject that interests one by the encyclopaedic method of remembering which letter of the alphabet the subject begins with, where in the alphabet that letter stands, and turning to a thereabouts place in the book. For instance, on page 3 is a mention of "three small pictures by Matisse." That is Art. And on page 246 there are two dogs, which is Zoology.

Cookery comes soon after Art, and may be found on page 8 combined with Cooling of the Affections.

> Hélène (Gertrude Stein's cook) had her opinions, she did not, for instance, like Matisse. She said a Frenchman should not stay unexpectedly to a meal, particularly if he asked the servant beforehand what there was for dinner. She said foreigners had a perfect right to do these things but not a Frenchman, and Matisse had once done it. So when Miss Stein said to her, Monsieur Matisse is staying for dinner this evening, she would say, In that case I will not make an omelette but fry the eggs. It takes the same number of eggs and the same amount of butter, but it shows less respect, and he will understand.

It was in 1903 that Gertrude Stein joined her brother in Paris and began to buy pictures in twos; canvases by Cézanne and Renoir and Gauguin.

> It sounds like a great deal now, but in those days these things did not cost much. And so the winter went on. Before the winter was over, having gone so far Gertrude Stein and her brother decided to go further, they decided to buy a big Cézanne and then they would stop. There were about eight to choose from and the decision was difficult. They had often to go and refresh themselves with honey cakes at Fouquet's.

At last the decision was made, the picture bought. They put it in a cab and they went home with it.

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It was an important purchase because in looking and looking at this picture Gertrude Stein wrote *Three Lives*.

She had begun not long before as an exercise in literature to translate Flaubert's *Trois Contes*, and then she had this Cézanne and she looked at it, and under its stimulus she wrote *Three Lives*.

The routing and recreating spirit, the true spring-cleaning fervour to state without dust, which from the work of one artist kindled the work of another, set Gertrude Stein to a manner of writing which, even while the body of her work was unpublished, made her the joy of the thousands who never read her and of the few who did. The influence of that manner is only just upon the literary; but the debt owed it by modern advertising is incalculable, and since, sooner or later, even the literary become conscious of advertisements, it seems likely that in her lifetime she may find herself the mother of all living. Meanwhile she has had a very happy life, as has had Alice B. Toklas, her companion for twenty-five years and the subject of this autobiography. For the secret of happy living, as of good eating, is to get things fresh, to plunge into their unevaporated juices; and the writer's greed for dustless statement has fringed over into a knack for getting at the quiddity of friends and acquaintances, so that nowhere in this book, so crowded with characters and incidents, is there the dull shine of a sham. Even the people who appear for one moment come, like Doctor Claribel Cone of Baltimore, "majestically in and out." Doctor Claribel Cone

> liked ease and graciousness and comfort. She and her sister Etta Cone were travelling. The only room in the hotel was not comfortable. Etta bade her sister put up with it as it was only for one night. Etta, answered Doctor Claribel, one night in my life is as important as any other night in my life, and I must be comfortable.

To know people thus is genius, a touchstone of genius. We all do, but, not being geniuses, remain unaware of it. How full, how happy, how untrammelled the genius-life of Gertrude Stein has been the following extract may convey:

> In the meantime Georges Hugnet wrote a poem called Enfance. Gertrude Stein offered to translate it for him, but instead she wrote a poem about it. This at first pleased Georges Hugnet too much and then did not please him at all. Gertrude Stein then called the poem Before the Flowers of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded. Everybody mixed themselves up in all this. The group broke up. Gertrude Stein was very upset and then consoled herself by telling all about it in a delightful short story called From Left to Right and which was printed in the London Harper's Bazaar.

Every ingredient of happiness is here: intellectual friendship, creation, distress, more creation, publication. It is a flower. It is also a perfect piece of narrative. And the whole book is like this, from beginning to ending delightful, and brilliant with sincerity.

LAFAYETTE AND THE REVOLUTION

Lafayette, Revolutionary Gentleman. By MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE. *Cape.* 15*s.*

French Revolution, Biographical Studies. By J. MILLS WHITHAM. *Routledge.* 15*s.*

Lafayette is a perplexing, and most interesting, subject for study. Modern historians have inclined to show him as a liberal in the worst sense of the word: a man of words, of vague principles, of niggling compromises, a man who used his ideals and his good intentions as an excuse for indecisiveness in every crisis.

To offset this view, there is the opinion of the two men, among all who knew Lafayette, who were most likely to despise such qualities: Washington and Napoleon. Washington's affection for Lafayette, and his esteem for him, are hard to explain on the theory that the Frenchman was a sentimentalist not to be trusted when the pinch came. And thirty years after Washington had accepted Lafayette as a friend, almost as a son, Napoleon accepted him as an opponent too brave and honest for mockery. Later, when Lafayette had played a leading part in the drama of his abdication, Napoleon recanted his former good opinion; but the spite was so obvious that the first thoughts remain the impressive ones.

The author of this new biography, Count Michael de la Bedoyere, inclines on the whole to the favourable view, and presents Lafayette as a liberal in the most friendly sense of the word. He absolves Lafayette from the charge of insincerity, by showing him as a man whose liberalism was so rarified and so idealised that it was bound to defeat itself when tested too sternly in the world of action. As a young man, during his American adventure, this temperament served him well. He was never in a commanding position, being chiefly a symbol and an inspiration to the somewhat lukewarm American public opinion. A disillusioned French officer serving in the War of Independence wrote that "there is a hundred times more enthusiasm for the (American) revolution in any Paris café than in the whole of the United States put together." Had Lafayette known what a large element of truth there was in this statement, his spirits must have been damped and he would not have served his purpose in America. Later, during the peace negotiations, the antagonistic aims of the French and the Americans were so clear to men of judgment that the American Commissioners broke their country's pledge and made an agreement with their enemies behind the backs of their allies. Again, Lafayette failed to see the facts; but as it was his purpose to be a living sign of Franco-American friendship, he served this purpose all the better for his ignorance.

Later, however, when he was in a position of command, when acting instead of mere being was demanded of him, his habit of seeing the ideal rather than the fact destroyed him. The crisis of his life came in 1792, when he commanded an army which could have saved the King and the Declaration of Rights. "There could be but one method at this stage, the method of force. A force equal in magnitude to that bringing about the Terror would alone save democracy, and the only force available was Lafayette's army. To use it would mean civil war, a denial of all the ideals of the Revolution, a confession of failure more complete than his own personal ruin." Lafayette havered until it was too late, then went into exile. He was never again an historical agent of the first importance, though his greatest success as a symbol was yet to come—in 1824–1825—when he revisited America and travelled over five thousand miles, cheered and fêted day and night as the beloved of Washington, the friend and defender of democracy in a wicked Europe. Congress voted Lafayette $200,000 and a township. No other man has ever received such a triumph in the United States—and this amazing tour must have seemed to him the justification and the reward of a lifetime in the service of the word Liberty.

Count Michael de la Bedoyere has given a convincing, sympathetic picture of Lafayette. In doing so, he has written interestingly on sixty years of history, three revolutions, and a group of the world's most dramatic characters.

In the biographical sketches which make up *French Revolution*, Mr. Whitham has also written interestingly, but without much power to illuminate. Here are ten brief Lives, including studies of Philippe-Égalité, Fouquier-Tinville, Madame Roland, Charlotte Corday, and Madame Tallien. Each of these men and women can be made the subject of a good story and of a study in human character and motive. Mr. Whitham tells the story entertainingly, enough, but is unconvincing in his exploration of psychology. And his style has a disturbing flavour of Carlylese.

HERBERT AGAR

MONETARY PROBLEMS

What Everybody Wants to Know About Money. Planned and Edited by G. D. H. COLE. *Gollancz.* 5*s.*

Before the war very few persons bothered to know anything about money, except how to get and how to spend it. Even to the few who concerned themselves with economic questions money was of quite secondary importance. Its value was fairly stable as between the currencies of different countries and different periods of contract, and the expression "safe as a bank" carried no dubious significance. If all the belligerent Governments in the war had financed their expenditure entirely out of taxation, instead of by borrowing and inflation, nearly all the post-war trouble about finance would have been avoided. For nearly all the real costs of the war were defrayed out of current production. It was the cowardice and policy of war-time and peace-making Governments that piled up the heap of financial troubles from which the world is suffering to-day. For the cause of the troubles is the unproductive lending, internal and external, together with the form of debt called reparations, which came from war finance. The bouts of inflation and deflation, the violent fluctuations of prices, the increasing burdens of taxation and of fixed interest costs, the stickiness of foreign exchange, the unbalanced budgets, and all the other obstacles to the free use of the vast productive resources of the world are to a large extent products of the war mentality. But not altogether. Mr. Cole and the group of young Oxford economists who collaborate in this skilful and serviceable study are well aware that, even had there been no

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Great War, the rapid changes taking place in the technique and organisation of industry and in the distribution and use of private and public incomes would have required an overhauling and a planned control of the financial apparatus, if the new powers of production were to be utilised fully and advantageously.

By far the greater part of this book is given to a description of currency and credit, the part played by central and joint stock banks and the other financial apparatus of the City in providing and apportioning money for short and long terms, and investment, and the discounting of commercial bills in this and other leading business nations. I know no other book which provides for intelligent men and women, alive to the importance of monetary problems, so reliable, full and intelligible an account of what they ought to " want to know." It is not all easy reading. It needs considerable concentration. But it does not presuppose the interest or knowledge of a " specialist." Special terms and processes are put into plain everyday language. One chapter admits itself to be difficult. It is entitled " Four Monetary Hunters," and is devoted to a criticism of the views of Major Douglas, Professor Soddy, Gesell and Eisler. The long treatment of Major Douglas, though designed to convert his followers to the true faith, will probably prove too stiff for that purpose.

I have seen some criticism of this book to the effect that under the cover of an objective study it is tendencious and even propagandist. But that charge can be made against the whole body of literature handling any living subject. Some writers upon money, while admitting defects in the operation of existing methods of finance, would leave things alone, because they believe in " natural recovery " and fear the ills of any conscious social management. Mr. Cole and his colleagues, on the contrary, hold that the wastes and risks disclosed in the working of our financial institutions are capable of rational concerted remedies. Their general opinion links up financial with industrial planning, and favours nationalisation of the Central and great deposit banks so as to provide for the general public a secure means of depositing spare cash and " an institution which could act as the financial section of a national economic planning authority " (498). The wastes and frauds of the private enterprise banking system in the United States have been revealed recently in a series of tragical episodes. But though our system is at once more solid and more resilient, we have no reason for holding that it can do what is required to provide the best financial support to the economic planning upon which this country, like every other advanced industrial country, is committed in the near future. Social control of banking, investment and insurance, and, through these instruments, of equitable distribution of income and security of employment, lies near ahead for all who have eyes to see and are not the slaves of fear and custom. If there is not enough faith, courage and disinterestedness to take in hand this necessary task, the little cherished signs of " natural recovery " which to-day appear on the horizon will only lull us into a new brief period of a still more dangerous lethargy. To all who want a sane economic world, and realise the part monetary reforms must play in getting it, I recommend this book as worthy of the highest consideration.

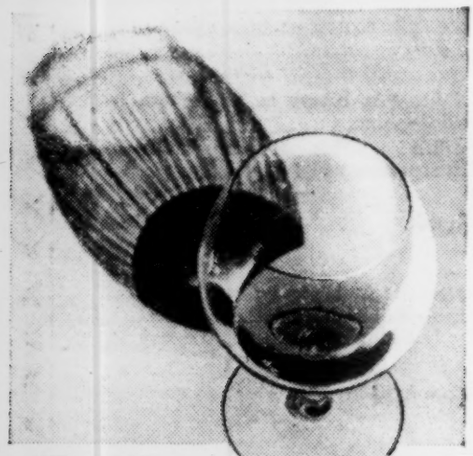
J. A. HOBSON

A DETECTIVE MASTERPIECE

Lord Edgware Dies. By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
Information Received. By E. R. PUNSHON. *Benn.* 7s. 6d.
Death Whispers. By JOSEPH B. CARR. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.
In Muffled Night. By D. ERSKINE MUIR. *Methuen.* 3s. 6d.
The Mystery of Villa Aurelia. By BURTON E. STEVENSON. *Rich and Cowan.* 7s. 6d.
The Duke's Last Trick. By C. F. GREGG. *Methuen.* 7s. 6d.
The Affair at Aliquid. By G. D. H. and M. COLE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.

Mrs. Agatha Christie is quite beyond criticism, unless it be that she does not write enough novels. *Lord Edgware Dies* is the best detective story published this year. There is no tedium and no hurry in the solving of the murder; every character is suspicious and plausibly suspicious, and the weight of accusation is equally distributed. Poirot is the secret of Mrs. Christie's triumphs. She has invented a perfect technique for her detective in his personal interviews with every suspect. His Belgian idioms distract the reader just enough from the sense of what he is saying to conceal the real upshot of every interview, which is to intensify suspiciousness while appearing to allay it. Nobody can have a talk with Poirot without letting some cat out of the bag, and yet the moment the cat is out Poirot dexterously replaces the animal, almost without the reader's notice. By this means Mrs. Christie gets her climax. Our anxiety to identify the real clue from among all the apparent clues becomes cumulative and the *dénouement* comes as a sudden relief. But besides this dramatic value, Poirot's relentless " Yes " and " No " to every question one wants finally answered, allows Mrs. Christie to be absolutely fair with the psychology of her characters. Her criminals need never be insane, and no one need hurriedly develop from a charwoman to a Borgia or from Jekyll to Hyde. It is impossible to cavil at the solution of Lord Edgware's murder; the answer to all our questions when it comes is completely satisfactory—and of how few detective stories nowadays is one able to say that?

Mr. Punshon's latest is not one of his best. He is not as happy with his new detective, a young police constable educated at Oxford, as he used to be with Inspector Carter and Sergeant Bell; the young man may use his wits effectively, but he is not so far very bright in dialogue. The solving of the murder of a business—Big Business—man in his billiards-room in North London is protracted by a very obvious, and therefore not very misleading, cross-trail; and there is besides one of those horrid demands on the reader's tolerance or fatuity in Mr. Punshon's explanation of how the deed was carried out. It would not, however, be wise for the voracious detective reader to miss out *Information Received* from his library list, for if he goes further he is likely to fare worse. For instance, *Death Whispers* should be avoided unless anyone can enjoy the gloomy unravelling of a fantastic crime in Massachusetts in which the number of distressing improbabilities is the only interference with the course of justice. A gross detective, Oceola Archer, is the hero, whose corpulence and greediness are supposed to render him endearing, but are more likely to antagonise any ordinary soul. *In Muffled Night* is a disappointment. It starts out with a plan of the house to indicate with X's where the body was found and where the stains on the carpet were partly washed out, provides a list of the characters with their relationship to each other, and keeps up the detective attitude for two-thirds of the book. Then it collapses for no reason at all and becomes a mere thriller, with the crime solving itself by the evidence given at the trial of an obvious innocent. Mr. Erskine Muir writes intelligently and has original ideas, but *In Muffled*



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Night would have been far better with less originality of structure. *The Mystery of Villa Aurelia* and *The Duke's Last Trick* are both thrillers. The Villa Aurelia contains an Italian Countess behaving most oddly to an American novelist on the Riviera over some documents, and is centred in riches and aristocracy. There are some tips on food and drink, and the way to play roulette with an adventuress by your side. The style is admirably quiet for the luxuriousness of the theme, and I would warmly recommend the book to those who like Phillips Oppenheim. *The Duke's Last Trick* is inferior to inferior Edgar Wallace and in the same *genre*, with a noble super-criminal defying the world.

The Affair At Aliquid deserves to come last. The Coles can write detective stories, but they cannot write like P. G. Wodehouse. Yet this book appears with the Crime Club cover, and purports therefore to deal with crime. That may be one of the jokes, or even the crime itself, which I otherwise missed. The intention of the book is to give a rollicking account of Bohemians rubbing shoulders with a Duke by entering the Castle in disguise. There is no plot, only a succession of funny incidents, such as stealing a clergyman's trousers. The Coles should try writing for *Punch*.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

CHEERFULNESS BROKE IN

Memories of a Victorian. By EDGAR JEPSON. Volume I. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Man rises above all materialisms and rationalisms in various ways. He demonstrates the absurdity of such theories by religion, by the exercise of the heroic virtues, by the imagination as manifested in all the arts: more cogently than Johnson with his stone, he bellows, as he lays down his life for his friend, or hears a Mass, or paints a picture, or writes an epic, or composes a fugue: "I refute them *thus*." And he does likewise, in a minor mode, perhaps, when he shows his magnificent capacity for the whimsical. The Odyssey is strange and beautiful—strangeness always dwells with beauty, as Bacon has instructed us—and so was Ion Thynne, an undergraduate of New College, and friend of Mr. Edgar Jepson, then at Balliol.

Thynne had the grace and the charm of manner which in those days, Mr. Jepson thinks, came only from having been at Eton. He was widely read in Greek and Latin, English and French. He was an authority on the Christian Fathers. He held that Apuleius and Petronius Arbiter and Athenaeus were more worthy of study than Thucydides and Cicero and Aristotle as propounded by the schools; and his politics were fierce.

> We were ardent believers in a bloody revolution and clamoured for the peoples to rise in their might and extirpate on the instant all Kings and Priests. Naturally, these sentiments cut no ice, as we Moderns phrase it, with the College authorities; they were not certain whether Ion would consider them Kings or Priests; but they were quite certain that he would extirpate them.

So they sent him down, but not before he had delighted his friends with many engaging tricks and manners.

> In the middle of his sitting-room, which was the untidiest, with books, I ever knew, rose a vast umbrella which hid the ceiling, and under it Ion would sit . , . a tankard before him, and meditate on his knowledge and add to it and discourse on it, and many an entertaining and informing hour I spent listening to him and discussing poetry and morals and the strange manners of men—and of women. We were all greatly interested in women and had theories about them; but I know now that only women understand women, and they like them little and trust them less.

There were certain dangers or inconveniences attached to the company of Ion Thynne.

> It was only when he went out into the world that he was dangerous in his cups, for he carried an inordinately long walking-stick, almost a staff, of a hard wood, which, he insisted, was the male of the bamboo. With this male of the bamboo he would on occasion strike a perfect stranger, whom he suspected, always wrongly, of veiled impertinence, and I at any rate found it difficult to persuade the perfect stranger that he really meant nothing by it. Only once did he try to murder me with that damned male of the bamboo.

Thynne, it seems, had confessed to Mr. Jepson that he had murdered his brother-in-law, a Scottish brother-in-law, and a rather dull man. Thynne said that he had knocked this fellow on the head with the male of the bamboo, and had dropped the body into a wee burn. Mr. Jepson declares that he was not interested in the story:

> But then Thynne clapped his hand to his forehead and said: "Good God! What have I done? Betrayed myself! I must destroy the evidence!" and went for me with the male of the bamboo.

But the story has a happy ending. Mr. Jepson was the swifter runner, and next morning Thynne remembered nothing of the murder and its sequel.

It is safe to conclude, I think, that Mr. Jepson himself has a slight vein of the whimsical. Otherwise, he would not have been the friend of Alexander Louis Texeira de Mattos San Payo y Mendes. The author speaks of this owner of a stupendous name as a Dutchman, but I believe he belonged to one of the families of Portuguese Jews who were forced to take refuge in Holland in the seventeenth century. He was an accomplished man of letters, but he had a rarer talent than literature. He could make the purely imbecile joke—and act it.

> Often when we met in Piccadilly or Bond Street we would, by way of greeting, wave our right legs gracefully at one another, and the fashionable throng would check in its course in a sudden awe. I have known him, on a Sunday afternoon, after Swedish punch, climb, in his silk hat and frock coat, a lamp-post in High Holborn with an incomparable dignity.

Texeira was also—though Mr. Jepson omits this pleasing feature in his character—a convinced and earnest Jacobite, and a strenuous worker for the cause of the White Rose. I used to wonder how it concerned him; but there were many odd things about the Jacobite Interest in the 'Nineties. I remember Mr. Philip Sergeant, the secretary of the circle for which Texeira toiled, telling me that they had recently welcomed a loyal deputation of Huntingdonshire farm labourers. "How long have they been Jacobites?" I asked, in some amazement. "They have never been anything else," replied Mr. Sergeant. He informed me that Texeira de Mattos was a Grand Compounder; but I do not quite know what that is. It sounds rich to me.

These are but bits and scraps from Mr. Jepson's Victorian annals of the odd and gay and whimsical and tragic people that he knew. There is a whole gallery of portraits: Beardsley, Frank Harris in his glory, George Moore seen from the comic angle of vision, Ernest Dowson on his wharf and in his café, Lionel Johnson being carried upstairs to his rooms in Gray's Inn, and mistaking Samaritan Jepson for Bandits. Then, there was Dulcie, one of Dowson's Cynaras, who on a certain occasion grew tired of Art,

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I often hear young people talking about the dullness, the rigidities, the frigidities of the Victorian age. I am silent, and wonder. I wonder what is the use of reading history books about the life of 1590–1600 when such rubbish can be spoken, written and believed about the life of 1890–1900.

ARTHUR MACHEN

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In England, and even more in America, it has for some time been almost impossible to publish profitably, and to sell, biographies of the once accepted type. The shelves of most of us who are over thirty and have some interest in history are sprinkled with a selection of *Lives* of eminent or obscure persons which are all made to a fixed and honourable pattern. They may not be so interesting as the more recent type of biography, but they are more valuable to "a man genuinely seeking information," and it is worth while knowing the outer signs by which they can be quickly distinguished.

These are three. (1) They pass under their own names. A life of John Pym, for example, is called *John Pym*, or, more exuberantly, *Life of John Pym*. It is not called *Upright and Unafraid*, or *The King's Foe*. (2) They begin with the birth of the hero, proceed chronologically through his life and end with his death, sometimes adding a chapter estimating his "place in history." They do not contain any imaginary conversations and scarcely any psychological explanations. (3) They contain an index and a full list of authorities, with footnotes.

The omission of all these distinguishing signs is a mark of the newer biography for which Lytton Strachey is historically, but not morally, responsible. Quite serious writers are affected by it. The best recent life of Franklin starts with purely imaginary "tavern scenes" of a Hollywood kind. The writer of this, who has produced lives of John Wilkes and Robert Emmet, was told, entirely truthfully, by his American publisher, that if he published these books under the names of their subjects, or with footnotes, no sales would be possible.

The reaction from this style is reaching a high point when books like these two lives of Hampden are published. Both of them are fully documented, and written with a painstaking regard for accuracy and fullness. Mr. Drinkwater's is the larger and more obviously erudite book. He has taken seriously the task of refuting the myth-making, Catholicising school which endeavours to make saints of Laud and Charles. These two are poor material for saints: Laud was cruel, fussy, and small-minded; Charles was treacherous to foe and (as Strafford found) to friend as well. Mr. Drinkwater deals with them satisfactorily; but the seriousness with which he takes his duty impedes his style. The book is heavy reading.

Mr. Williamson's book, which is lighter to read, is in no degree less careful. He takes in his text a clear line on such disputed points as Hampden's projected emigration to America, and allows no doubt in the text; but he discusses his reasons fairly in an appendix. He admits that he has included "two doubtful stories" and loyally calls our attention to them in his foreword. One of them shall serve as a specimen of his writing. It deals with Pym's speech against Strafford.

> A spectator noted: "I believe the King never heard a lecture in so free language against his idolised prerogative." But suddenly Pym faltered. Across the long, dark hall he caught sight of Strafford's face—the fierce eyes dimmed with the pain of physical suffering; the mop of hair, streaked prematurely with grey; the haughty expression, doubtful and puzzled as, conscious of his fidelity to his own vision, he listened incredulously to Pym's ascription of deliberate wickedness. The years rolled back. For one blinding second Pym saw Wentworth, his friend. He broke down and fumbled among his papers. "To humble the man," wrote the same spectator, "God let his memory fail him to a point or two."

You perceive in this the extreme that Mr. Williamson allows himself. There *is* imported matter here. Who saw Strafford's face? Who knows his thought? Who knows of Pym's "blinding second"? Perhaps he really fumbled only because he had mislaid a paper. Nevertheless, what is imported here is but little; Mr. Williamson has called it to our notice; and in his last sentence clearly but inoffensively shows on what he bases his flight of fancy.

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THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

The Land of Promise. By EDMOND FLEG. Translated by LOUISE WISE. *Werner Laurie.* 10s. 6d.

M. Edmond Fleg is very well known in France; and his *Moses*, which is a work of genius, is or ought to be well known in England also. He is a happy blend of the Jew and the Frenchman, and any work of his is sure to command respect.

The book before us, *Ma Palestine*, had its origin in M. Fleg's design of writing a Life of Christ from the Jewish point of view—a purpose which we sincerely hope he will accomplish. With this plan in his mind he visited Palestine—and suffered a mental metamorphosis. What he saw was less the Palestine of Jesus, Pilate, and Caiaphas than the land as transformed by the energy and patience of the Jews who have been living there during the last dozen years. He saw Gethsemane, and his thoughts were on the Hebron Massacre. He is more deeply interested in the new city of Tel Aviv than in Nazareth. He does not mention the Wood of Ephraim, but he gives an illustration of the Ye'ar Balfor, the forest planted in memory of the statesman who brought about the return of the Jews to the Holy Land; and his pages are full of descriptions of the Hebrew University, the Einstein Institute, and the electric power-station at Tiberias.

All this has gone to his head like the wines of Palestine, which already, he tells us, rival those of France. Nor is this exhilaration surprising; for unquestionably what has been done by the Jews in these few years is a marvel. For one thing, the Dead Sea has been turned into a lake of life. But there is another side to it. Not only has it made M. Fleg's book an elongated dithyramb, in which it is difficult to detect a coherent meaning, but it starts questions to which an answer is hard to find. The Jews are not the only people in the country: there are others, who have been there for centuries, to whom material civilisation means little, and to whom the Return is not a coming-home but an invasion and a theft. To reconcile the conflicting claims is a task for the highest

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and most impartial statesmanship. There are signs, in this book, that some Jews will require to be held in hand. "We should," says one of them, "have demanded the carrying out of the Mandate, mass-immigration, expropriation of the Arabs, that they be transferred elsewhere, and we be repatriated by every means on the land which belongs to us." The Arab, said another, knows no argument but force; and the "Berith Shalom," the League of Nations, does not understand its business.

The Jews are in Palestine to stay: but the Arabs are there to stay also; and the problem of the future is to contrive that they dwell together in unity. E. E. KELLETT

RELIGION AND COMMUNISM

Religion and Communism. By J. F. HECKER. *Chapman and Hall.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The End of Our Time. By NICHOLAS BERDYAEV. *Sheed and Ward.* 6*s.*

Dr. Hecker's book follows quickly upon the heels of his "Communist Dialogues," and, though it covers a narrower field, it is a book of very real utility. It has a twofold purpose. On the one hand, by its succinct and competent account of Russian Church history, it seeks to explain and justify the breakdown of official religion before the forces of revolution; on the other, by a full and careful description of the organised attack of the atheists, it seeks to show how, and how far successfully, the foundations of a new humanism are being laid.

The whole narrative is of remarkable interest. It is no exaggeration to insist that the Russian Church deserved its failure. Very largely ignorant, dogmatic, rooted in superstition, the historic ally of the worst excesses of Tsarist reaction, once the hollowness of the régime upon which it depended was exposed, its own title to domination was bound to go too. Dr. Hecker has no difficulty in accounting for its downfall. What one wishes he had discussed more amply are the details of its destruction. How genuine are the claims that its members were persecuted? To what extent, after the civil wars closed, did its members indulge in counter-revolutionary work? From his statistics it is clear that there is now a period of relative calm in the relationships of Church and State; but it is also clear that Dr. Hecker does not think the Church is in a position to regain, or can hope to reconquer, its lost territory. And his reasons are the unanswerable argument that the Church in its main manifestations corresponds to a system of property-relations which have been finally liquidated. It was, quite definitely, a weapon of the propertied classes. It had no purpose to serve under a new social scheme. The only religious beliefs which show signs of endurance in the new Russia are those whose dogmatic basis can be fitted into a new social perspective. That seems to be true of evangelical cults, and, to some degree, of Roman Catholicism. It is untrue of the late official faith, of Judaism, and, in an increasing degree, of Mohammedanism. As the primitive Eastern peoples are brought into closer contact with Soviet industrialism, it is obvious that the hold of the Koran will visibly relax. The Cross could not conquer the Crescent; but tractor and movie may win triumphs denied to an older technique.

Dr. Hecker's account of atheist propaganda is fascinating. Of its substance one is tempted to say that wherever it is violent and crude it is comparatively ineffectual; that its successes are associated with its power genuinely to educate those it seeks to influence into a realisation of the dubious foundations of religious faith. Its power, in a word, is akin to the power of bodies like the secular societies in this country; though it has, of course, the immensely important advantage of being able to take the offensive in its campaign under official auspices. Its results may be fairly summarised by suggesting that a people can fairly quickly be persuaded to abandon faith in a special set of religious dogmas upon the condition that the alternative proffered them is an ideal which is capable of firing their imagination. Russian Communism has done this, at least for those young enough not to be set in traditional ways; and so long as it can associate popular imagination with its effort, and continue its educational activity upon an intense scale, it has little reason to fear the competition of orthodox religions. The reader of Dr. Hecker's book who compares his account with either Aulard's essay upon Christianity in the French Revolution, or Dr. Bakke's fascinating discussion in his very remarkable work *The Unemployed Man*, of the relation of the Churches in this country to the workers, will, I think, be fairly confident that the psychological foundations of the Russian position differ only from that elsewhere by reason of the side upon which the influence of the Government is cast.

M. Berdyaev, whom Dr. Hecker fairly describes as one of the leading "Neo-Christians" of modern Russia, prophesies in his book the breakdown of modern civilisation, because he can find no meaning in any life in which the central principle is not a mystic communion with God. He loathes alike the acquisitiveness of capitalist society and the diabolism of Communist Russia. He is eloquent and passionate in his assertion that humanity has taken the wrong road. He is probably right in his view that we have reached a turning-point in the history of our civilisation; but unless his own special mystical insight conveys meaning to his reader, his rhapsodies, whether of denunciation or of affirmation, will only leave him with the conviction that they are a means of escaping from the necessity of confronting a reality he cannot bear to face. HAROLD J. LASKI

THE SAPLINGS AND THE OAK

Over the River. By JOHN GALSWORTHY. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Forsyte proceedings have been wound up while Kit and Kat and little Cuffs are still in the nursery: nobody will ever know what was ordained for these final shoots of the family tree. Galsworthy's comprehensive vision narrowed when the saplings began to replace the old confident Forsyte stock, so perhaps their fates would have interested us less than June's or Soames' or even Fleur's. Fleur was a product of the great disillusion, but she was Soames' daughter every inch. No doubt it was easier to see the 1880's in perspective than the 1920's, and the difficulties of the chronicle multiplied when the family began to split up in the years of slump. There were no more happy meetings at Timothy's, from which each member rolled away in his carriage replete with gossip and a sense of Forsyte worth. The richly humorous texture of relationships faded; the tolerance of nephews for aunts and of uncles for nieces, because each contributed spice to the dish, became attenuated. The aunts and uncles still exist in the post-war years, but they are remote from the struggles of the young and their Forsyteness ceases to impress, to shock, and above all to be amusing. Life for the saplings is thin and serious and the young themselves are seldom shown in a comic light. Perhaps chivalry (a bad fairy's gift to a satirist) kept Galsworthy from poking fun at them. Aunt Em survives in *Over the River* to mingle the ridiculous with the wise, and the elderly General, jibbing at theories while he responds instantaneously to facts, stirs the tail of humour; but Clare needs some witty and discerning Puck to make her real. So does Dinny, who is still under the shadow of her affair with Wilfred Desert. Admiration and pity are not enough to make a character live. The one revealing comment is Fleur's: "The cloister? . . . No, my dear—the hearth. That title was wrong, you know. It can't be both." We know a lot about Dinny and Clare; they might be living in the next parish, but we never meet them, never startle confession from their eyes. They are pedestalled in a dim or tricky light, the one being adored by an elderly lawyer, the other by a penniless young man who is trying to make a living in a world of diminishing prospects.

Galsworthy takes great pains to show that the saplings are as sound as the oak was, and that English "character" (which means, perhaps, integrity and common-sense) persists through economic disaster and social chaos. He muffs the effect with his women, who are chivalrously allowed to be secretive, but Tony Croom is a success. Tony is not just out for a good time; he wants an honest job and he wants Clare, but he makes touching efforts not to annoy her by parading his need. And thereby hangs the tale, which includes a divorce case—as ably recorded as anything in the saga—besides the inevitable dog and the deathbed scene. The divorce suit dramatises Galsworthy's case against the Law. Clare in the witness box tells a story which no jury could possibly believe, yet the same story, built up day by day for the reader's benefit, is entirely convincing. The patchiness of human actions, prompted at one moment by a silly impulse and at the next by Spartan self-respect, is not presentable in the Courts, which always decide on a conventional view of the probable. After the case is lost Clare throws herself at Tony, who at first runs away in anguish of mind (the psychology of this is admirable) and later accepts her as his mistress. Fleur pays the costs of the case and Dinny marries her Dornford; so the book ends with a victory for common-sense.

In choosing the chronicle form Galsworthy showed great

PIPE SMOKERS ARE SO ATTRACTIVE

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wisdom and not a little courage. Wisdom, because his gifts were ill-adapted to the novel of feeling; a hankering after beauty, which occasionally blossomed in his short stories, in the novel betrayed him into sentimentality and bathos. Beauty was an uncertain and a dangerous guide to Galsworthy as well as to those erratic Forsytes whose sense of property was weakened by the craving. In the chronicle Galsworthy's talent for observation of society had full scope, and the framework of life, the succession of births and deaths and daily events, upheld him where instinctive tact might have failed. He was courageous, too, because the period covered by the saga was one in which great social changes took place. Like Trollope, he showed how individuals developed in relation to love and loss (June is changed by the tragedy of Bosinney, but she is still essentially June); unlike Trollope, he showed how they reacted to prosperity, to war, to slump, to the newspapers and the changing horizon of the age. His success is outstanding. Old Jolyon, Soames, Michael, Fleur and the rest are imbued with the spirit of their times. In *Over the River* the politics are backwater politics, but Clare's little flat in the mews, with the deserted antique shop, breathes precisely the air of 1932. O. M.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Amateur Pilot. By THE EARL OF CARDIGAN. *Putnam.* 7s. 6d.

The Earl of Cardigan addresses himself to the novice in aviation and the non-flying public and gives an excellent account of the difficulties and problems involved in learning to fly. His chapter on landings is good and he gives excellent advice such as that the beginner should have an extra cushion and sit up high in the cockpit. He is particularly good on cross-country flying and gives one or two valuable tips in connection with it. On the other hand his account of Handley-Page slots is decidedly sketchy and he is too ready to assume that beginners will dislike such manoeuvres as vertical banks and side-slips. Certain temperaments find their first violent side-slip wildly exhilarating. The last chapter, in which he criticises the present-day light aeroplane, is extremely sensible, far more so than the manufacturers will be ready to admit, but he does not consider the comparative helplessness of a slow aeroplane on a windy day. But his ideal machine of ten years hence will really have rotors instead of planes. As he says himself, the only thing against the auto-giro is prejudice—and prejudice against new inventions collapses in a very short space of time.

The Tribulations of a Baronet: a Memoir of Sir William Eden. By SIR TIMOTHY EDEN. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

Sir William Eden's tribulations, alas, did not end with his famous passage-at-arms with Whistler, for he has fallen into the hands of a portrait-painter whose ambition, and natural piety, have proved greater than his literary skill. Sir Timothy Eden had an excellent minor subject in this hard-riding North Country baronet who had so delicate a touch with water-colours: one of those generous, quarrelsome, annoying, attractive independents who have always enlivened the English scene. But he has chosen to open his memoir in a landscape-with-figure vein which sets the pitch too high for what follows; there is little chronological sense in the main part of the book; he offers more judgments than facts; and although he gives us glimpses of a muscular, pithy personality he somehow fails to bring him properly into the foreground. The book as a whole is disappointing, but Sir William's bark rings out sharp and clear in some of the extracts from his letters.

Up the Attic Stairs. By VIOLET M. MACDONALD. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

This short, prim, rambling book is suitable for invalids who require entertainment (refined) with a minimum of shock. Mrs. Macdonald, in recapturing the flavour of her childhood and young-ladyhood at Geneva, has her little turns of wit, and her artist's eye discovers pleasure in the lights along the lake, the sudden transformations of snowfall, the odd personalities of the drawing master, the accompanist, Tante Therese the headmistress, and Tante Mirette her aide-de-camp. Old-fashioned Geneva emerges chiefly in flavours, in draughts when the north wind was blowing, and in queer pattering noises. The drawings which accompany the text suffer in reproduction, but one is well designed.

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 42.—THE MILITARY DINNER-PARTY
(By E. A. Barclay-Smith)

During the course of a dinner-party the butler, while following the port round the table, overheard remarks made by the various diners. Each remark was addressed to one of the diner's neighbours. Starting with the host they were as follows:

1. "You know, I often think that one of the many privileges of the host at a table like this is that he has infinite room for his elbows!"
2. "Ah, no, he's not my brother; I'm an only child."
3. "Frightfully military, to-night, aren't we? A general, a major, three captains and two subalterns."
4. "Yes, and the subalterns are really what the word implies; they're only 27. I think all the other men are over 30."
5. "I say, old . . . what's his name, I never can remember . . . must be getting on; as a captain he'll have to retire soon, when he reaches 48, and only two years later even if he does get his step."
6. "No, he's still on the active list, there's only one retired officer here to-night."
7. "Your two boys are in great form to-night; they've hardly stopped talking since we sat down."
8. "Well, not only are we all married couples, but none of us has been married twice. Though you never know, these days!"
9. "Are you going home next leave, Mrs. Smith?"
10. "Well, we're not the only couple who're the same age as each other; everybody here is."
11. "It must be dashed difficult arranging the table for a sort of family show like this; as it is, in three cases parent and child are sitting opposite one another."
12. "Yes, but it's very well done; nobody is next to a relation, or even an 'in law.'"
13. "No, thanks, Mrs. Jones, I never touch it."
14. "I don't like very early marriages myself, and I'm glad to see that none of the women here married until well over 21."

WHAT WAS THE NAME AND RANK OF THE HOST?

PROBLEM 40.—JOYVILLE

Significant remarks are made by Basil and Everard. The judges can only distribute their points in the twelve following different ways:

6 1 1 1 1 0	4 2 2 1 1 0	3 3 1 1 1 1
5 2 1 1 1 0	4 2 1 1 1 1	3 3 2 1 1 0
5 1 1 1 1 1	3 2 2 2 1 0	2 2 2 2 2 0
4 3 1 1 1 0	3 2 2 1 1 1	2 2 2 2 1 1

The first column shows the points of the judges who made Annette the winner, the second those of the judges who tied her for first place, and the third denotes inapplicable distributions.

Annette gets 40 points and Fern 10. Hence the placing must be:

Annette	40
Helen	14
Mayblossom	13
Prudence	12
Sonia	11
Fern	10

The remaining data enable us to construct the following table:

	Annette.	Helen.	May.	Prudence.	Sonia.	Fern.
Everard	6	1	1	1	1	0
Lionel	5	2	1	1	1	0
Basil	5	1	1	1	1	1
Jim	3	1	1	1	2	2
Hamish	3	1	1	1	1	3
Victor	3	3	2	1	1	0
Geoffrey	4	1	1	1	2	1
Alec	4	1	2	2	0	1
Teddy	3	2	0	2	2	1
Stephen	4	1	3	1	0	1

PROBLEM 39.—ROLLING THE BONES

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to Dr. E. Hinden, 13 Hoveden Road, N.W.2.

There were nineteen correct and ten incorrect solutions.

Ten points are awarded for this problem.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

YIELDS ON BRITISH AND DOMINION GOVERNMENTS AND INDUSTRIAL DEBENTURES COMPARED—ANGLO-NEWFOUNDLAND—HOME RAILS

After New Zealand's success with a £5,000,000 3½ per cent. conversion loan at 97 comes South Africa with a £13,000,000 3½ per cent. loan at 98½. Australia has still £34½ millions of 5½ per cent. and 5 per cent. loans which can be called for redemption at any time and will no doubt try to better her last success (3¾ per cent. at 98) when she enters the market again. The reason for the success of these loans is, first, that they are conversion issues, involving no new money; secondly, that there is a shortage of gilt-edged loans obtainable below par; thirdly, that they offer a fixed date of repayment not too far ahead—from 15 to 30 years; fourthly, that the new issue market is a protected one, the Treasury maintaining the embargo on foreign loans and allowing only Trustee conversion issues by special permit. In fact, a specially authorised Dominion conversion loan is the type of issue which the City loves—one which enriches the underwriters without making any demands upon enterprise or capital. The particular demand in London for medium-dated gilt-edged stocks at a discount is being cleverly exploited by the great Dominion borrowers. Of course, they will do it once too often. After a series of successes the last home corporation issue went badly for underwriters. If past experience is any guide, it will probably fall to the lot of Australia to spoil the market. The following table shows the narrowing of the margin between the yields obtainable on British Government and Dominion Government stocks in London :—

Actuaries Investment Index.

	Average Yields %.		
	Sept. 29, 1931.	Sept. 27, 1932.	Sept. 26, 1933.
Great Britain	5.01	3.66	3.49
Australia	8.35	4.67	4.02
New Zealand	6.09	4.25	3.88
Canada	5.13	3.70	3.35
South Africa	5.15	3.91	3.52

Dominion borrowers would be wise not to presume too long upon the popularity of medium-dated issues at a discount. Long-dated British Government stocks appear so much undervalued in comparison with Dominion and home corporation stocks that the next fashionable move may be towards 3½ per cent. Conversion Loan, 3½ per cent. War Loan and 3 per cent. Local Loans.

* * *

If the investor questions, on a comparison with British Government stocks, whether the return now offered by Dominion loans is sufficient compensation for the additional risk involved, he will stand aghast at industrial debenture yields, which in some cases are as low as 3¾ per cent. The shortage of investment meat is becoming so acute that the scrag is almost as dear as the joint. In 1931 the difference between the yield returnable on industrial debentures and British Government securities was 1½ per cent. Naturally the difference narrows down as company earnings improve and the trade risks lessen. To-day the Actuaries' Investment Index gives an average yield for debentures of 4¼ per cent.—just ¾ per cent. more than that on British Government stocks. Curiously enough, the difference was the same in 1928, British Government securities then yielding 4½ per cent. and industrial debentures 5¼ per cent. Recently it has been marked that British Government securities have barely maintained their market prices while the average yield on industrial debentures has steadily decreased. Apart from the fashionable demand for stocks with a fixed date of redemption as opposed to irredeemable, there is a special reason for the improvement in industrial debenture stocks—namely, the increase in liquidity. According to the *Financial News*, British industry is more liquid now than at any time in the last ten years. The next table shows how surplus liquid assets have increased in the past two years for some leading companies.

	Total Net Liquid Assets (including Stocks). (1930–31.) (In Thousands £'s.)	(Last Balance-sheet.)
Imperial Chemical Industries	15,561	17,450
Shell	14,120	15,260
Courtaulds	12,344	13,662
J. and P. Coats	8,471	9,361
Dunlop Rubber	3,862	5,940
Morris Motors	4,605	5,248
Associated Portland Cement	911	1,417
Distillers	549	1,106

In the light of these figures, there is no need to be surprised at the fact that the advances of the London Clearing Banks fell by £9 millions to a new low level in September. In the first phase of a recovery the big industrial combines finance themselves by utilising their own surplus resources. Nevertheless, apart from the extra security now offered, it cannot be denied that debentures as a class are unattractive as compared with British Government securities. When the trade recovery makes further progress and industrial concerns begin to raise loans to extend their plant or build new works the unhealthy superiority complex of industrial debentures will quickly vanish.

* * *

In passing we would draw attention to one industrial debenture which is yielding more than the average. This is Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company 4½ per cent. 1st mortgage debenture stock which can be bought at 99 to yield about £4 11s. per cent. annually. This £1,750,000 issue is secured as a first specific mortgage on the Company's freehold property, timber limits and plant and as a first floating charge on the undertaking and assets. The interest and sinking fund, which amount to £122,500 per annum, are secured as a first charge on the proceeds of newsprint paper sold to the Rothermere group under a contract between the Company and Associated Newspapers, Ltd., extending over the life of the debenture stock. This contract covers the whole of the requirements of Associated Newspapers, which in the past six years averaged over 125,000 tons annually, representing £1,250,000 per annum at the sterling market price for newsprint. Under the terms of the debenture deed the Associated Newspapers are bound to hand over to the debenture stock trustees in four equal quarterly instalments the amount required for the service of the debenture stock before the Anglo-Newfoundland Development receives a penny. Redemption is provided for by a cumulative sinking fund of 2½ per cent. per annum sufficient to redeem the stock by 1st July, 1957. The Company has power to call the stock for redemption at 105 per cent. between 1936-41 and at 103 between 1941-57. Newspaper war notwithstanding, the stock is worth attention.

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A correspondent has asked us to review the home railway position in the light of the traffics for the last quarter. This is best shown in tabular form :—

Comparisons with Corresponding Periods, 1932.

First Half-year, 1933.	Gt. Western. £	L.M.S. £	L.N.E.R. £	Southern. £
Gross increase or decrease	−459,000	−1,224,000	−981,000	− 91,000
Net increase or decrease	−177,000	− 300,000	−154,000	+280,000
Second Half-year, 1933.				
Gross 13 weeks ended Oct. 1st ..	+251,000	+ 441,000	+343,000	+155,000
Weekly Average ..	+ 19,308	+ 33,923	+ 26,385	+ 11,923

On the assumption that the total amount of savings in the second half of the year will be equal to the total amount of savings in the first half, the gross traffics in the second half of the year must show the following weekly increases :—

Weekly average required	54,000 to pay 3% on ord.	11,668* to pay 4% on 1st pref.	27,970 to pay 4% on 1st pref.	14,088 to pay 5% on pref. ord.

* £73,413 to pay both 1st pref. and 2nd pref. dividends.

The market has risen considerably since we first drew attention to the attractiveness of the London Midland and Scottish 1st preference and Southern Railway 5 per cent. preferred ordinary :—

	Prices 1933. Lowest.	End-July.	Present.	Approx. Yield %.
L.M.S. 4% 1st pref.	33½	47½	69¾	£4 6 0 on 3% £5 14 2 on 4%
L.M.S. 4% 2nd pref. (1923).	17	30½	47	£4 5 1 on 2% £8 10 2 on 4%
L.N.E. 4% 1st pref.	19½	37½	63	£3 3 6 on 2% £6 7 0 on 4%
„ 4% 2nd pref.	12¼	23½	36	£2 15 7 on 1% £5 11 1 on 2%
Southern pref. ord. ..	28	44	68½	£3 13 0 on 2½% £7 6 0 on 5%

On these figures it seems time for the speculator to take his profit on the London Midland and Scottish 1st preference and exchange into L.N.E. 1st preference. Southern Railway preferred ordinary is still good to hold.

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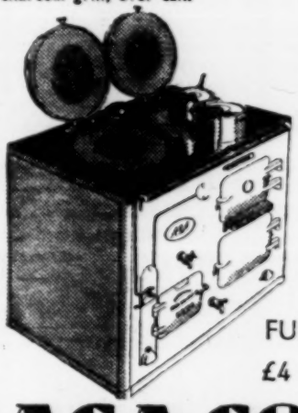

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